The Routledge History of Fashion and Dress, 1800 to the Present

Edited by VÉRONIQUE POUILLARD and VINCENT DUBÉ-SENÉCAL

ROUTLEDGE HISTORIES

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The time span covered by *The Routledge History of Fashion and Dress* starts in the nineteenth century, with the aftermath of the consumers' revolution, and reaches all the way to the present. The fashion and garment industries have been international from the beginning and, as such, this volume looks at the history of fashion and dress through the lenses of both international and global history. Because fashion is also a multifaceted subject with human agency at its core, at the confluence of the material (fabrics, clothing, dyes, tools, and machines) and the immaterial (savoir-faire, identities, images, and brands), this volume adopts a transdisciplinary perspective, opening its pages to researchers from a variety of complementary fields.

The chapters in this volume are organized based on their relationship to five fields of study: economics and commerce, politics, business, identities, and historical sources.

Paying particular attention to change, the book goes beyond the great fashion capitals and well-known fashion centers and points to the broader geographies of fashion. Particular geographical areas focus on the emergence of new fashion systems and business models, whether they be in Sweden, Bangladesh, or Spain, or on the African continent, considered to be the "new frontier" of the industry.

Covering myriad aspects of the subject this is the perfect companion for all those interested in history of dress and fashion in the modern world.

Véronique Pouillard is a professor of international history at the University of Oslo (Norway). She has published *Paris to New York, The Transatlantic Fashion Industry in the Twentieth Century* (2021). She leads the research project ERC CoG CREATIVE IPR, The History of Intellectual Property in the Creative Industries (2018-2025).

Vincent Dubé-Senécal is a governance advisor at the Collège de Rosemont (Montréal, Québec). He is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Alumni and the author of *La mode française. Vecteur d'influence aux États-Unis (1946-1960)* (2020). His research interests are the history of international relations, fashion, and diplomacy.

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Contributors

Toufoul Abou-Hodeib is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Oslo. She is interested in material culture and the interface between cultural and political history. Her research on the Middle East, with a specific focus on Lebanon and Palestine, has appeared in *History Compass, Contemporary Levant,* and *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, among others. She is also the author of the book *A Taste for Home: The Modern Middle Class in Ottoman Beirut* (Stanford University Press, 2017).

Maude Bass-Krueger is a Professor in the Art History, Music, and Theatre Studies Department at the University of Ghent. She specializes in fashion and architecture, museum history and theory, and curating. She co-curated the exhibition *Fashion, Women, and the First World War*, which opened in Paris in 2017 and NYC in 2019; a section of the exhibition focused on the simplification of mourning practices during and after World War I.

Carlo Marco Belfanti is a Professor of Economic History in the Department of Economics and Management, University of Brescia in Italy. His research field is the economic history of fashion and his publications include articles in *Business History*, *The Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Investigaciones de Historia Economica*, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies,* and *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing*.

Regina Lee Blaszczyk is Leadership Chair in the History of Business and Society at the University of Leeds. She has published 12 books, including 3 award-winning monographs: *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation from Wedgwood to Corning* (2000), *The Color Revolution* (2012), and *Fashionability: Abraham Moon and the Creation of British Cloth for the Global Market* (2017). She collaborated with Véronique Pouillard on *European Fashion: The Creation of a Global Industry* (2018).

Vincent Dubé-Senécal is a Governance Advisor at the Collège de Rosemont in Montréal, Québec. He is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Alumni and the author of *La mode française. Vecteur d'influence aux États-Unis (1946–1960)* (Québec, PUL, 2020). His research interests are the history of international relations, fashion, and diplomacy.

Hanne Eide is a Curator for Fashion and Dress at the Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo and a PhD candidate in fashion history at Stockholm University.

Adam Geczy is an Artist, Writer, and Educator with over 25 years' experience in these fields. Having graduated in painting in 1990, his areas of expertise have also covered painting and drawing, and more recently photomedia, video, installation, and performance. He is the founding editor of the journals *The Journal of Asia-Pacific Pop Culture* and *Ab-Original* (both from Penn State University Press). He is currently a postgraduate co-ordinator of the School of Language Arts and Media at the University of Sydney where he assumes the role of a Research director for Sydney College of the Arts since 2022.

Andrew Godley is the Pro-Dean of Resources and Partnerships at Henley Business School. He is a Professor of Management and Business History and the Academic Director of the Henley Centre for Entrepreneurship. Andrew's research interests lie in the areas of entrepreneurship and business history. Andrew has published in journals ranging from *Economic History Review*, *Business History Review*, *Journal of Management Studie*s, and *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* and won research grants from the ESRC, the Leverhulme Trust and British Academy among others.

Madeleine Goubau is a PhD student in Communication at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Her FRQSC Doctoral Scholarship-funded research focuses on the theoretical conceptualization of dress as a tool for public diplomacy. Madeleine Goubau is also a lecturer in Fashion and Communication at UQAM's École supérieure de mode and a fashion analyst for the Canadian public broadcaster Radio-Canada.

Anne Grosfilley is a French Anthropologist, with an expertise in textile and fashion in Africa. She is the author of several books, including the best seller *African Wax Print Textiles* (Prestel, 2018), also available in French, Italian and Japanese. She won the Millennium Award in England for her initiative to showcase Africa through its textile heritage. She regularly works as an exhibition curator and a consultant for luxury brands (Christian Dior, Edun).

Vicki Karaminas is a Professor of Fashion at Massey University New Zealand and Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne Australia. She has published over 40 books, journal articles and book chapters, and sits on several editorial and advisory boards. She is the book series editor (with Adam Geczy) of the *Anthem Studies in Fashion, Dress and Visual Cultures* (Anthem, UK) and *Style Discourse: Fashion, Art, and Culture* (Rutgers UP, US).

Ingun Grimstad Klepp is a Professor in clothing and sustainability at Consumption Research Norway, Oslo Metropolitan University. She has an MA and a PhD in ethnology from the University of Oslo. Her current field of research is clothing, laundry, and leisure consumption. Klepp has published extensively within her field, addressing the social, cultural, and material aspects of clothes consumption.

Anna König completed her first degree at Sussex University, then studied at Central Saint Martins and the London College of Fashion, where she completed her MA in Fashion History and Theory. Now lecturing at Arts University Bournemouth, her current research looks at different models of sustainability within the fashion and textile systems, with a specific focus on craft and mending.

Kirsi Laitala is a Senior Researcher at Consumption Research Norway (SIFO) at OsloMet. Her educational background is in textile engineering and she holds a PhD in Product design. Her research interest lies within sustainable clothing consumption including all the different aspects of use from acquisition to disposal. She uses interdisciplinary research methods that often combine material studies of textiles with consumer studies and qualitative methods with quantitative surveys.

Jennifer Le Zotte is an Assistant Professor of history and material culture at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Her book *From Goodwill to Grunge* (UNC Press, 2017) offers a history of secondhand venues in the United States, such as thrift stores, flea markets, and garage sales, alongside cultural analyses of fashionable secondhand dress. Her current work examines how modernizing America (1880–1940) regulated dress to maintain racial and sexual hierarchies.

Annette Lynch is a Professor in the Textile and Apparel Program at the University of Northern Iowa. She is the co-editor of *Ethnic Dress in the United States: A Cultural Encyclopedia*. In addition to her work on ethnic dress, her research focuses on the role of dress and appearance in negotiating gender role transformation and cultural change, particularly within the United States. Her book *Dress, Gender and Cultural Change* examined the role of dress worn within rites of passage in modifying and reinventing tradition and gender ideals for Hmong and African American teenagers and young adults.

Peter McNeil FAHA is an award-winning Design Historian and a Distinguished Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and since 2021 the editor of *Critical Studies in Men's Fashion*. For a decade, he was a Professor of Fashion Studies, Stockholm University, and more recently was an Academy of Finland Distinguished Professor, Aalto University.

Audrey Millet is a Marie Curie Research Fellow at the University of Oslo, specialist in the ecosystem of fashion. Her research focuses on the textile industry from 1600 to the present day from the economic, social, and technical history. She published *Fabriquer le désir. Une histoire de la mode de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Belin, 2020) and *Le livre noir de la mode. Création, production, manipulation* (Les Pérégrines, 2021). Her current project is a comparison of sweatshops in Paris in the 19th century and in Shanghai around 2000.

José Antonio Miranda is a Full Professor of Economic History at the University of Alicante (Spain) and he has been a visiting professor at the University of Padova and the University of Bari "Aldo Moro" (Italy). He is specialized in Business History and in the economic evolution of southern Europe. His main lines of research focus on the fashion industries, business strategies, and industrial districts. He has published widely on these subjects.

Tolulope Omoyele is a PhD candidate at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. Tolu is an alumni of the National University of Ireland (M.Litt), Trinity College, Ireland (Mphil), DunLaioghire Institute of Arts, Design and Technology, Ireland (P.dip), and Cork Institute of Technology (BSc In Computing and Information Technology). Tolu's research interests in African diaspora, African fashion cultures have been informed by the need for scholarly investigation in these areas, especially Nigerian dress cultures. A key component of Tolu's research interrogates the construction and production of Africa Fashion Week in the diaspora in London and other diasporic spaces.

Eugenia Paulicelli is a Professor of Italian, Comparative Literatures, and Women Studies at Queens College and The Graduate Center of The City University of New York. Her research spans the history and theory of fashion and its relationship with the arts, media, and politics; literature and the visual arts; cinema. She has published 13 books as author, editor, and co-editor. She has authored the books: *Fashion under Fascism. Beyond the Black Shirt* (Berg, 2004); *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy. From Sprezzatura to Satire* (Ashgate, 2014 and Routledge, 2016); *The Fabric of Cultures. Fashion, Identity, Globalization* (co-editor, Routledge, 2009); *Italian Style. Fashion & Film from Early Cinema to the Digital Age* (Bloomsbury Academics, 2016 and 2017).

Véronique Pouillard is a Professor of International History at the University of Oslo, Institute for Archaeology, Conservation and History (Norway). She has published *Paris to New York, The Transatlantic Fashion Industry in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, HUP, 2021). She leads the research project ERC CoG CREATIVE IPR, The History of Intellectual Property in the Creative Industries (2018–2025).

Shahidur Rahman is a Professor of Sociology in the Department of Economics and Social Sciences at BRAC University, Bangladesh. His research interests include political economy of development, labour governance, industrial relations, and the Bangladesh garment industry. Shahidur is the author of three books and his recent book, *The Bangladesh Garment Industry and the Global Supply Chain: Choices and Constraints of Management* was published by Routledge in 2021.

Alba Roldán is a Lecturer at the University of Alicante (Spain) and she has been a visiting scholar at the University of York. She is specialized in monetary, industrial, and business history of southern Europe. Her most recent publications are “A Resilient Industry? Business Strategies in the Footwear Industry of Southern Europe, 1970–2007,” with J.A. Miranda (*Enterprise & Society*) and “Did the Non-adoption of the Gold Standard Benefit or Harm Spanish Economy? A Counterfactual Analysis Between 1870-1913” (*Investigaciones de Historia Económica*). The latter received the “Ramón Carande” Research Award from the Spanish Association of Economic History in 2019.

Katrina Sark is an Associate Professor of Fashion Studies in the Department of Design and Communications at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). She specializes in cultural analysis, cultural history, media, and gender studies, sustainability, and decolonization. She is the founder of the Canadian Fashion Scholars Network, the co-founder of the Urban Chic book series, with co-authored books, including *Berliner Chic: A Locational History of Berlin Fashion* (2011), *Montréal Chic: A Locational History of Montreal Fashion* (2016), and the forthcoming *Copenhagen Chic: A Locational History of Copenhagen Fashion*.

Valerie Steele is the Director and Chief Curator of The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Steele has written numerous books on the history of fashion, and can be regarded as one of the pioneers in the study of fashion. She is a curator of the exhibition *Paris, Capital of Fashion* and editor and co-author of its accompanying book.

Karen Jamison Trivette, MLS, is an Associate Professor/Librarian and Head of Special Collections and College Archives at the Fashion Institute of Technology-SUNY.

Trivette earned her Master of Library Science with a concentration in Archives and Records Management from the University at Albany-SUNY. She is currently engaged in her PhD studies in Archival Sciences at the Alma Mater Europaea of Maribor, Slovenia. Trivette has published widely and presented at many conferences in the USA and abroad.

Lisa van Barneveld is a graduate of the Erasmus Mundus international masters GLOCAL (Global Markets and Local Creativities), set-up by University of Glasgow, University of Göttingen, University of Barcelona, and Erasmus University Rotterdam. She was a member of the New Fashion Society, an organization that focuses on bridging the gap between the fashion industry and university students. She has researched creative industries, the global economy, innovation, and cities. Her master thesis focused on the relationship between fashion trend forecasting, technology, and gender.

Jennifer Van Haaften has been a history and museum professional for over 25 years. Her early research focused on clothing and textile history, culminating in her thesis on extant 19th-century women's clothing examples in British museums in light of early British consumerism at the University of Manchester. Her museum expertise encompasses developing and managing living history programs with focused research on the lives of 19th-century immigrants in the Midwest which are then recreated and demonstrated for the public at large.

Paula von Wachenfeldt is an Associate Professor in Fashion Studies at Stockholm University. Her research involves both historical and contemporary controversies about luxury and fashion. In a number of academic books and peer-reviewed journals she has published on the historical debate on luxury (Intellect, 2013), fashion and advertising (Studies in Communication Sciences, 2018), the representation of luxury fashion in contemporary time (Intellect, 2018), and the mediation of brands in digital media (Fashion Theory, 2019). She is the co-editor of the volume *Luxury Fashion and Media Communication: Between the Material and Immaterial* (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Louise Wallenberg is a Professor of Fashion Studies at the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden. She holds a PhD in Cinema Studies from the same university (2002) and she was the establishing director of the Centre for Fashion Studies between 2007 and 2013. Among her publications are the co-edited volumes *Fashion and Modernism* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), *Fashion, Film, and the 1960s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017), *Harry bit för bit: Harry Scheins många ansikten* (Stockholm: Carlsson förlag, 2017), and the forthcoming *Fashion Aesthetics and Ethics* (Bloomsbury).

Elizabeth Way is an Assistant Curator of Costume at The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Her exhibitions include *Global Fashion Capitals* (2015), *Black Fashion Designers* (2016), and *Fabric In Fashion* (2018). Way's personal research focuses on the intersection of African American culture and fashion. She edited the book *Black Designers in American Fashion* (2021). Way holds an MA in Costume Studies from New York University.

Jean Williams is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education, at the University of Reading. She has written extensively on the history of sport and leisure, and on sporting costumes. As a cultural historian who has worked extensively with the museum and archives sectors, Williams is particularly interested in the gendered, material, and emotional economies of sports clothing, writing on football boot design and manufacture, and the adoption of replica football shirts by adult fans, now itself a multi-million pound industry, and originating in children's toy gifting in the mid-20th century. Jean edited *Kit: Fashioning the Sporting Body* (Routledge, 2016) and has presented on how Elizabeth II has defined her monarchy through her leisure interests as an equestrian, and particularly her fondness for the Olympic Games.

Ben Wubs is a Professor of International Business History at the ESHCC, Erasmus University Rotterdam, an Appointed Project Professor at the Graduate School of Economics, Kyoto University, and a Programme Director of the Erasmus Mundus International Master's programme GLOCAL. He is engaged in various research projects related to international business, offshore financial centres, business systems, transnational economic regions, and the transnational fashion industry. He has published widely on these topics in international journals and academic books.

Introduction

Fashion Reinvention

Véronique Pouillard and Vincent Dubé-Senécal

The fashion industry is changing. Over the last months and years, it has gone through events that have had a profound and probably long-lasting impact: the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and its consequences for energy supplies and trade, the growing awareness of climate change and its impact on consumption habits, to cite but a few. Those events have also shown that fashion is an industry that has an immense capacity to reinvent itself. One of the best examples of reinvention can be found in the personality of the British entrepreneur and designer Vivienne Westwood (1941–2022), who passed while we were proceeding to the very last stages of preparation for this volume. In 1971, Westwood, initially a school teacher, founded with her partner Malcolm McLaren a fashion shop that became known as SEX and was the epicenter for the birth of the punk movement. Westwood proved to be a ground-breaking designer, whose works challenged cultural boundaries and commented on society and politics. She was also a skilled businesswoman and created a brand with great longevity.

Over the decades, Westwood received recognition from the establishment, including an OBE, numerous design awards, and retrospective exhibitions of her work. She also always remained an activist, whose focus shifted towards environmental causes with a fierceness and an energy similar to that which she deployed when she was a punk. In 2015, she drove a tank to the then prime minister David Cameron's property to protest fracking in Great Britain.[1] This was, as always with Westwood, done with a great sense of humor, but was also symptomatic of Westwood's much older and broader commitment to environmentalism. Westwood was early to tell consumers to buy less and to own fewer and better things, a discourse that seems now very sensible to middle-class Western consumers, but was not mainstream when Westwood began to talk about it. Just like the fashion industry, Westwood managed to reinvent herself. It is fashion reinvention that this anthology is exploring.

The idea that fashion has come to an end is often discussed in the West and has been the topic of several books.[2] Often, views on the end of fashion have been linked to ideas of militant consumerism, especially in regard to labor conditions. Questions of human rights among fashion industry workers have returned throughout fashion's history, marked by tragic events, from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire that killed 146 in New York in 1911 to the Rana Plaza Factory disaster in Dhaka, which took place ten years ago, on April 24, 2013, and killed 1,132 people. This book examines both the tensions in fashion labor and the argument that better jobs can help start economies on a path to greater prosperity. Moreover, fashion was questioned, following in the footsteps of Vivienne Westwood, over its environmental footprint. The fashion industry was, for Westwood as well as for a growing number of consumer activist movements around the

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world, producing too much, too fast, at too high a cost for the workers and the environment. It was time for new business models to emerge, and for rediscovering other forms of consumption, that included the ones studied in this book: buying second hand, sewing made-to-measure clothes, mending, and repairing.

More recently, new issues have been added to this debate, notably ruptures in the supply chain, especially since the war in Ukraine, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at every level of the trade. And yet, despite all these difficulties, fashion remains among the most dynamic industries globally. After the pandemic, fashion growth has been mainly driven by the luxury industry, and yet it has regained growth faster than expected. Fashion is not dead, but is changing. The recent additional speculation on where fashion may be going, and the pleas of numerous actors to change the course of its evolution, whether they be consumers' platforms or from the producers' ranks, have created renewed interest in the industry.

Historians and Fashion

The timespan covered by *The Routledge History of Fashion and Dress* starts in the nineteenth century, with the aftermath of the consumers' revolution and the end of the Ancien Regime, and reaches all the way to the present. The fashion and garment industries have been international from the beginning and, as such, this volume looks at the history of fashion and dress through the lenses of both international and global history. However, because fashion is also a multifaceted subject with human agency at its core, at the confluence of the material (fabrics, clothing, dyes, tools, and machines) and the immaterial (savoir-faire, identities, images, and brands), this volume also adopts a transdisciplinary perspective, opening its pages to researchers from a variety of complementary fields to better circumscribe fashion's diffuse nature. As such, the historicization of fashion as an international and global phenomenon constitutes the common thread of this volume. The chapters in this book examine fashion through space and time in its plurality of definitions from art to industry, including consumption, production, creation, and reappropriation. Fashion and garment manufacturing still make up one of the world's most important industries, with a global value that, in 2020, represented 1.65 percent of the world's GDP.[3] Despite this economic importance, fashion and dress have only recently gained prominence in historical research. They found a place first in museum curatorship and design teaching but long remained marginalized from the core of history as an academic discipline. Save for the works of historians on the consumers' revolution and on Ancien Regime consumption—including important works by such historians as Daniel Roche, Maxine Berg, and Jan de Vries[4]—fashion has been slow to infiltrate the canon of historical works. The characteristic gaps in fashion historiography have been observed by many scholars, notably by Lou Taylor in her major book published in 2002, *The Study of Dress History*.[5] The reasons for this are multiple. The labor of fashion and dress was considered to be first and foremost a female activity, which contributed to its history being left in the shadows. Furthermore, the tension between fashion commodities, which have often been cast in Western culture as frivolous, and a production characterized by the poorest class of workers, contributed to keeping fashion in the margins of scholarship.

This is no longer the case. Over recent decades, fashion and dress history has become a thriving field of academic work. A domain at the intersection of numerous disciplines, fashion and dress history requires scholars to build bridges between cultural history, fashion studies, economic history, art history, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, gender studies, and more. The recent developments in gender history and the emergence of a material turn in the humanities and social sciences have led finally to a consolidation of the place of fashion and dress in the discipline of history. Such developments have resulted in a renewed interest not only in the objects themselves but also in the development of the economic history of fashion. Numerous scholars, from Karl Marx to Pierre Bourdieu, have shown fashionable dress to be a good example of commodity fetishism.[6] The conditions of production of fashionable goods tended to disappear behind the marketing of those goods. Historians have set to the task of researching the economic history of fashion ecosystems. Such studies seek to explore the less visible actors in the fashion industry or, to use the same terms as Marx and Bourdieu, to *de-fetishize* fashionable commodities. This book, therefore, reconnects the history of fashion with the chains of production.

Most recently, historians and sociologists have argued for the need to "pull back the curtain" on fashion as an industry and to include exploration of the labor and business cultures behind the scenes, as in recent works by Regina Lee Blaszczyk, Giulia Mensitieri, and Alexandra Palmer.[7] Following in their footsteps, the place of labor, the emotional economies of dress, the history of fashions as politics and as vehicles for propaganda, the environmental study of fashion, and the history of fashion firms all figure prominently in *The Routledge History of Fashion and Dress*.

Fashion and dress have historically been, as noted above, international industries. Focusing as it does on the last two centuries, this book explores the different stages of the internationalization of fashion. The conceptual tools of center and periphery occupy a central place in the history of fashion and dress. Cases selected in this anthology aim to address such questions, including by challenging common ideas of what constitutes center and periphery in the fashion industries. Some chapters in this volume take up global connections and flows, while others address cases situated in specific locations that work to convey the sense of the wider history. We have not attempted to cover the whole geography of the world in this volume; for example, we are not covering the entirety of Asia and South America but have instead chosen examples that illustrate the rise of fast fashion systems and the relocation of the production from the West to other continents, with particular attention paid to processes. In addition, we have worked to put forward relevant examples that address questions of the internationalization of the fashion industry in an up-to-date manner: the current economic weight of the fashion industries and fashion's central place in the debates on globalization are good reasons to include the history of the present in the scope of these studies.

The Structure of the Book

The book is organized into five thematic sections. In Part I, six chapters focus on manufacturing and materiality, and engage with the social history of fashion and dress production by approaching the histories of multiple actors and practices. The turn to materiality and the history of globalization play an important role in the renewed interest in fashion manufacturing. This section of the book looks at the workshop and at the conditions of the production of dress. It shows the continuities in the garment-making process, centered on the sewing machine[8]—a technological innovation from the mid-nineteenth century that prevails to this day, as highlighted by David Edgerton in his milestone book *The Shock of the Old*.[9] Today, sewing robots—also called sewbots—can replace the human hand, but they remain much too expensive to be used widely. In Chapter 1, on the sewing machine, Andrew Godley tackles the history of this pivotal piece of technology from a global perspective, looking at its dissemination and use throughout key markets in Western Europe and North America as well as in Russia, the Balkans, Mexico, Japan, India, and the Middle East. Following the historicization of the influence and reach of this machine tool for the producers and consumers of fashion products, Audrey Millet focuses on the human variable in the chain of production in Chapter 2. Part I also examines innovations, particularly the industrial processes that gave us synthetic dyes and fabrics, which are at the heart of Chapter 3, by Regina Lee Blaszczyk. Anne Grosfilley's Chapter 4 historicizes the global trade in wax fabric through the prism of imperialism and colonialism, reflecting the relationship between Europe, Africa, and Asia as seen through this piece of cloth. In Chapter 5, Hanne Eide addresses the case of Sweden's fashion industry by looking at the development of the couture business from the mid-nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. In Chapter 6, Anna König historicizes the practice of mending and repairing clothes, integrating consumers as an active agent in the reappropriation and dissemination of secondhand fashions.

Part II focuses on the political history of fashion and dress. The power of fashion as a communication tool intertwines with both its global nature and its regional and national anchoring. This section of the book addresses this intertwined history at the junctions of the regional, the national, the international, and the global, including fashion's entanglements with the politics of production. Fashion is an international industry, yet fashion is also the locus of the construction of national identities. This is the focus of the first three chapters of Part II. In Chapter 7, Annette Lynch and Jennifer van Haaften look at the role of dress in creating and fostering regional and national identities throughout the nineteenth century. This is followed by Toufoul Abou-Hodeib's chapter, studying the changing connections between Palestinian embroidery and a Palestinian national identity in the twentieth century. In Chapter 9, Elizabeth Way explores the development of fashions by African-American fashion designers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, testifying to their overlooked influence in shaping U.S. fashion culture. Fashions and clothes are powerful carriers of messages, as communication theory has shown in numerous works, among which is Malcolm Barnard's foundational study *Fashion as Communication*.[10] These messages can be, and often are, ambiguous, as fashion tends to lend itself to desires both to blend in and to stand out, and can also be read through different lenses. In Chapter 10, Louise Wallenberg looks at the ambivalent two-way relationship between fashion and feminism, the latter having been influenced by the former while both influencing and criticizing it in return. Finally, the last two chapters of Part II look at the politics of fashion through government policies that can support the fashion industry as part of protectionist policies and foster national production or encourage the consumption of nationally—or regionally—made products. In Chapter 11, Eugenia Paulicelli examines the complexities of the ties between fashion and the Fascist regime of Italy from the interwar years to World War II, highlighting fashion's relationship with the many types of policy and politics adopted during this period. In Chapter 12, Vincent Dubé-Senécal and Madeleine Goubau look at the relationship between fashion and diplomacy, combining diplomatic history, fashion studies, and communication studies to start a discussion on the diplomatic roles and multifaceted influences of fashion.

Part III builds upon the history of manufacturing developed in Part I and focuses on the economic history of fashion firms. Companies can be of extremely variable scale. The challenges in apprehending the typology of fashion firms may be one of the reasons why fashion has been underrepresented in the work of economic historians. This anthology proves that fashion matters to economic history in all its facets, from the history of business models to those of technologies, intellectual property rights, and law. In Chapter 13, Lisa van Barneveld and Ben Wubs dive into the subject of innovation by looking at the changing nature of fashion forecasting through the advent of artificial intelligence, examining its influence on the gender balance of the fashion trend forecasting industry in Europe. This chapter then moves on to examine in more depth the genesis and development of various prominent segments of fashion industries that have had major economic influence. This is followed, in Chapter 14, by the work of José Antonio Miranda and Alba Roldán on the evolution of fast fashion as a business model, looking most notably at the Swedish H&M and Spanish Inditex (owner of Zara), and its transformation due to rapid technological changes, the popularization of a variety of social media platforms, and the rapid change in global distribution through online retailers. In Chapter 15, Shahidur Rahman studies the development of Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry, one of the global components enabling fast fashion's existence and growth, which also constitutes the backbone of Bangladesh's economic growth, generating considerable employment among women and contributing to their empowerment. In Chapter 16, Tolulope Omoyele pursues a history of the present by studying African Fashion Week Nigeria and the fashioning of a contemporary Yoruba cultural identity. In Chapter 17, Marco Belfanti discusses the way in which tangible and intangible cultural heritage have contributed to new brand identity strategies based on evolving marketing tools, from sponsored business histories to storytelling through corporate museum exhibitions. As such, Véronique Pouillard's Chapter 18 studies the relationship of fashion and the law from the perspective of intellectual property rights, showcasing the importance of examining the ties between fashion and the law from a multi-level perspective, as both national and international laws play key roles in the development of businesses along transnational lines. The chapters by Belfanti and by von Wachenfeldt especially examine the impact of the internet on the potential dematerialization of the fashion system, on consumer-centered practices, on supply chains, and on sustainability. In Chapter 19, Paula von Wachenfeldt examines the challenges faced by luxury fashion with the advent and subsequent popularization of social media platforms creating a new form of activism that scrutinizes fashion businesses and their brand images.

Part IV deepens the connection between the history of fashion and dress and the history of consumers, and contributes to the larger exploration of fashion as capital, especially in terms of symbolic capital. The choice is also made here to directly address the issue essential to fashion history: the dual history of fashion as body politics and as expression. While these themes are reflected throughout the chapters in Part IV, they are at the very core of Chapters 20 and 21. In Chapter 20, Jean Williams explores the relationship between sport and fashion, which places the active body at the heart of representations of age, class, and national and ethnic identities. This is followed, in Chapter 21, by Maude Bass-Krueger's work on the history of mourning dress, which centers on the historicization of emotions and social norms, linking the study of mourning dress to that of colonialism and imperialism. Fashion and dress provide means of both inclusion and distinction, as noted by theoreticians including Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen, and Pierre Bourdieu.[11] This part of the book addresses the questions posed by these theoreticians in a diachronic and global perspective, and further builds on the relation between fashion history and gender history. As such, in Chapter 22, Peter

McNeil examines the oft-overlooked history of men's fashion with a particular interest in the second half of the nineteenth century, when a myriad of actors from diverse cultural and countercultural backgrounds impacted men's fashion. In this regard, McNeil also integrates questions of sexual orientation and gender identity as part of the historicization of men's fashion. The questions of gender identities and sexual orientations and their relationship to fashion are deepened in the following three chapters. First, in Chapter 23, reprinted from her 1985 book *Fashion and Eroticism: The Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Era to the Jazz Age*,[12] Valerie Steele addresses the relation between fashion and eroticism, this time with a focus on the interwar period. Second, getting closer in time to us, Chapter 24 by Katrina Sark proposes a history of the present time to examine several contemporary case studies from popular culture, investigating the ways in which gender identities are being dismantled and reframed through fashion within social media communities as well as more mainstream cultural media such as music. In Chapter 25, Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas present a historical overview of queer fashion starting from its emergence in the nineteenth century and examining its influence on mainstream fashion up until the beginning of the twenty-first century. In addition, Part IV also seeks to reinforce the interest of scholars in the emotional economies of fashion, which is a particularly powerful topic in the historiographical context of the material turn. In so doing, Part IV also builds particularly strong bridges with part II, on the history of fashion and dress politics. This is especially true of Chapters 26 and 27, looking at the washing of clothes and the cultural economies of secondhand clothes. In Chapter 26, Ingun Grimstad Klepp and Kirsi Laitala historicize humanity's relationship to dirt and cleanliness, showing how the understanding of dirty and clean clothes, as well as the methods to clean them, has evolved in the last 200 years. Klepp and Laitala examine this subject from multiple perspectives, integrating cultural differences between genders and between different generations as well as discussing the environmental impacts of laundry. This discussion on environmental impact is further expanded in Jennifer Le Zotte's Chapter 27, studying the evolution of secondhand clothing from its beginning as an activity of the poor to its development as a global industry in today's economy, integrating to this historicization the questions of environmental costs and labor abuses.

Part V is concerned with the sources for the history of fashion and dress, and offers a synthetic approach to the sources of fashion and dress history, thus reconnecting historical results with conditions of research feasibility. This part is the briefest, composed of one chapter. In Chapter 28, Karen Trivette builds on her extensive experience as head librarian of the FIT to foster the use of written and printed archival sources along with material sources. Her chapter also shows how the creation of digital repositories is changing the work of fashion and dress historians.

Alternative Readings

While the chapters in this volume are organized based on their relationship to five fields of study—economics and commerce, politics, business, identities, and historical sources—the chapters are also related to each other through several crosscutting themes that traverse each part and chapter, tying them together across their respective fields of study. We propose in this introduction five crosscutting themes, which all share the same roots in that they each represent historical phenomena that have influenced the field of fashion as well as having been influenced by it through both time and space in a way that both constrains and enables the decision-making of actors in the fashion industry.

The five cross-cutting themes are as follows: the dematerialization of fashion; manufacturing, reshoring, and more generally the rematerialization of fashion; consumption and the agency of consumers; environmental challenges and fashion change, and intellectual property and brand value. These themes are currently emphasized in fashion research, but also in the questions posed by policy makers and industry leaders in an industry that has been in perpetual change over the last two centuries. They are also open for cross-fertilization and comparative studies with other sectors of economic activity.

We invite readers to use this book creatively: chapters can be read in the order of the table of contents, or in different blocks, revisiting the themes described above. Last but not least, it is also possible to read the chapters according to geographies: the West, the East, and the South are all represented in different pieces, while some chapters embrace circulations, whether they be of influence, migrations, and trade. We have not sought to systematically cover each geographical area, a task that is beyond the scope of this volume. But we have tried to give relevant examples of the dynamics at work in the industry during these last two centuries. Paying particular attention to change, the chapters that concentrate on particular geographical areas focus on the emergence of new fashion systems and business models, whether they be in Sweden, Bangladesh, or Spain, or on the African continent, considered to be the "new frontier" of the industry, and therefore of great importance. This volume aims to go beyond the great fashion capitals and well-known fashion centers and point to the broader geographies of fashion. We hope that the readers will engage with the various modes of reading proposed here, and find that various paths are possible through the studies in the volume.

The first cross-cutting theme, the dematerialization of fashion, began with the advent of the fashion press in the nineteenth century and was pursued across the rise of the mass media in the early twentieth century, all the way to the development of digital media and literal digital fashions from video games to ones backed by non-fungible tokens (NFTs).[13] The dematerialization of fashion has recently been the topic of numerous articles and books that aim to see how the trade in fabrics, textiles, and accessories was complemented, during the last centuries, by a growing trade in ideas. Vincent Dubé-Sénécal has shown, through his work in the archives of the French customs, how the trade in fashions from France was, for some parts, replaced by a trade in ideas during the interwar period.[14] Issues of dematerialization and exports are examined here in Chapter 11 by Paulicelli on exporting fashion under Italian fascism and in Chapter 12 by Dubé-Sénécal and Goubeau on fashion and diplomacy. The history of fashion forecasters and consultants, which started during the nineteenth century, is another very important aspect of the dematerialization of some parts of the fashion industry. Trend forecasters are, to this day, selling trends rather than merchandise. Such business-to-business services, although not necessarily directly visible to the consumer, have an important impact on the trends that percolate from the designers to the mass market.[15] In Chapter 13, Van Barneveld and Wubs examine the question of gender in the fashion forecasting business. The latest developments in the dematerialization of fashion bring the reader to the digital world, notably through exposure in the social media and in the virtual worlds of non-fungible tokens (NFTs). In Chapter 19, von Wachenfeldt analyzes the interrelations between recent media developments and creativity in luxury fashion.

The second theme that we are proposing to the reader is the "rematerialization" of fashion, grounded in the incremental patrimonialization of clothing during the second half of the nineteenth century and accelerating in the second half of the twentieth century with the advent of corporate museums and the global dissemination of this practice,[16] as examined by Belfanti in Chapter 17 on cultural heritage and intangible assets. Heritage and the significance of making is also at the core of several chapters, especially Chapter 4 by Grosfilley on the global trade of the wax fabric and Chapter 8 by Abou-Hodeib on Palestinian labor and embroidery. Elsewhere, the growing place of fashion in the museum has been an important creator of value for the industry, and contributes, as recently coined by Pierre-Yves Donzé, to selling Europe to the world.[17] Rematerialization is also taking historians back into the workshop and the factory, revisiting the multifaceted aspects of materiality in the making of fashions. The chapters of Part I on manufacturing are relevant here, but also those that address the ways of doing things, to follow in the footsteps of Michel de Certeau,[18] including mending, in König's Chapter 6, and washing, in Klepp and Laitala's Chapter 26.

The third theme is the growing agency of consumers as part of the globalizing and massifying consumer societies of the twentieth century's second half, most notably with the advent of the "ConsumActor," conveying the renewed agency of consumers in the production of value.[19] Consumer activism has a long history and has systematically addressed the power of fashion in consumption. Early on, abolitionists in the United States and consumers' leagues in the western world have sought to promote moral consumption, and even chastized the activity.[20] The concerns voiced by militant consumers are at the heart of Millet's Chapter 2 on the chain of production. More complex relations between consumption and body politics are at the heart of Louise Wallenberg's Chapter 10 on fashion and feminism. At odds with consumer activism, the pressure for cheaper clothes, often called the democratization of fashion, is a red thread that runs through many chapters in the volume, among which are Chapter 14 by Miranda and Roldán on fast fashion, Chapter 15 by Rahman on the Bangladesh ready-made garment industry, and Chapter 20 by Jean Williams on sports in fashion.

The fourth theme, in line with the rise in consumer activism paralleling that of the "ConsumActors," is the corresponding growth of environmentalism in its various forms, from sustainable fashions to vegan clothing and reuse of secondhand garments, including abuse from producers of labels and the advent of greenwashing.[21] Over the last couple of decades, new business models have emerged or were reinvigorated. For example, recent firms such as Rent the Runway have made renting fashionable and luxury garments a respected mode of consumption that aligns with greener practices of buying less and reusing.[22] The last decade has been a fascinating laboratory for greener change in entrepreneurial and consumption practices that will without doubt inspire newer studies. In this volume, Chapter 6 by König on mending and repairing, Chapter 26 by Klepp and Laitala on washing clothes, and Chapter 27 by Le Zotte on the cultural economies of secondhand clothes propose ground-breaking approaches to these essential questions to the past and future of the fashion industry.

The fifth theme, the overarching question of intellectual property rights, is closely linked to that of innovation and intersects with the four previous crosscutting themes through questions of branding, patenting, and labeling. Chapter 5 by Eide on Swedish fashions demonstrates the constant need for fashions to disseminate in order to grow. Chapter 17 by Belfanti gives important insights into the value that fashion industries gain from patrimonalization, while Chapter 18 by Pouillard, Chapter 19 by von Wachenfeldt, and Chapter 20 by Williams discuss the challenges of protecting brands and of brand or designer exposure. Indeed, the historicization of the first four cross-cutting themes necessitates the examination of evolving national and international laws and regulations pertaining to controlling the dissemination and usage of brand images and their storied past, ensuring the quality of the identities represented by brand images through labeling, and ensuring positive associations of brands with topical social issues to meet the demands for probity from the new generation of "ConsumActors." Finally, documenting fashion for both consumers and historians has greatly benefited from the digitalization of its sources, which is the topic of Trivette's Chapter 28 on the sources for the history of fashion.

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Part I

Manufacturing and Materiality

1 The Sewing Machine

Andrew Godley

Introduction

The sewing machine was one of the most revolutionary machines in history, transforming garment making by reducing the time taken for stitching by eighty percent.[1] Unsurprisingly, the sewing machine was adopted very quickly after its invention in clothing manufacturing centers across Europe and the United States in the 1850s and 1860s. Clothing industry manufacturers increasingly specialized in very specific items: men's jackets, or gloves, or shirts, for example. As the clothing industry matured in the second half of the nineteenth century, the typical workshop and factory size grew, and capital investment increased, notably with a growth in demand for specialist sewing machines.[2]

The best data are from Britain, where the 1907 Census of Production enumerated 190,000 sewing machines operating in the UK manufacturing sector. This figure of the total stock of industrial sewing machines in Britain, underlines, however, what is perhaps the most salient fact about why the sewing machine was so revolutionary. While it started out as an industrial machine, it quickly turned into a remarkably successful consumer good. The sewing machine was the world's first mass-produced, mass-marketed consumer good.

This is evident when comparing the numbers of industrial machines in use with the total numbers of sewing machines. In Britain, for example, by the 1907 Census the total stock of industry machines was only a very small fraction of the total stock of *all* sewing machines. Singer, which enjoyed somewhere between 75 and 80 percent of the total market, had sold over 4 million sewing machines in Britain by 1907. This means that the total number of sewing machine sales in Britain from all producers would have been somewhat greater, perhaps around 5 million, meaning that the 190,000 machines used in industrial settings were somewhat less than 5 percent of all machines. Something like 95 percent of all sewing machines sold in the UK from 1875 to 1907 were sold as consumer goods to the family market.[3] This continued into the interwar period, when trade sales were less than 5 percent of total sales.[4]

It was similar elsewhere. In Germany, where Singer was the leading supplier of industrial sewing machines, manufacturers' demand was a tiny fraction of the total. In Switzerland, where Singer's share of the industrial market was 52 percent, there were just over 3,000 Singer machines in use in factories and workshops. But total sewing machine sales there had been well over 60,000 in the preceding ten years, suggesting machines for industrial use were no more than 10 percent of the total. Even in the United States in the early 1900s, when the ready-made clothing industry was booming, Singer's sales to

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manufacturers were only just over 8 percent of their total.[5] Sewing machine sales everywhere were almost entirely driven by consumer demand. Sewing machine sales were, in other words, overwhelmingly a phenomenon of the changing demand for home-produced clothing. The sewing machine acted as a catalyst for the liberation in the expression of a more fashion-conscious, home-produced clothing, first in the United States, then in western Europe, and then in southern and eastern Europe. But what is also remarkable about the history of the sewing machine is that it became increasingly popular all around the world.[6]

We now have several detailed case studies of the diffusion of the sewing machine outside the industrializing core of North America and Western Europe; in Russia, Mexico, Japan, India, and in the Middle East. These confirm that (with the partial exception of India before the 1930s) the diffusion of the sewing machine was overwhelmingly as a consumer good among families and households.[7] This growth in demand for domestic sewing machines not only precipitated the growth in home-produced fashion, but it also shaped the changes in that fashion by making the creation of some styles easier and others more difficult.[8] Fashion historians have often demonstrated the close interplay between cultural change and fashion. But a greater familiarization of the diffusion of the sewing machine around the world offers fashion historians the prospect of a more analytical focus on the quotidian, on the behavior of ordinary households in different countries as they adapted their methods of the home-production of family clothing, explored the constraints imposed by the dominant technology of production, and, as a result, began to create and adopt new styles of fashion.[9] Manufacturers' contemporary promotional literature emphasized that Western-styled, machine-stitched clothing was emblematic of Western civilization. But case studies of how the sewing machines were used by families around the world instead emphasize the diversity of home-produced garments.[10] Whatever the sewing machine unleashed around the world, it was far more nuanced and diverse than a global convergence on Western norms of styling.[11]

The purpose of this chapter is to provide something of a global perspective on the spread of the sewing machine during the years from around 1870 to around 1920. These were the years when the global sales of the sewing machine reached their peak. Because sewing machines are bought for the purpose of making clothing, this systematic comparison will allow us to observe differences in the inferred patterns of home-produced clothing across different countries. The chapter concludes with some initial speculations about the reasons why there might have been strong or not so strong preferences for home-produced fashion among ordinary households and families across different countries of the world. But much remains unknown. And so the chapter's real conclusion is to pose a series of potential areas for future research by fashion historians.

Plotting the Global Diffusion of the Consumer Sewing Machine

The invention of the sewing machine was truly a revolutionary event. Of all consumer durables, it was the sewing machine that spread furthest and widest through the world economy before 1920. For many families in emerging economies, the sewing machine was the most potent witness of technological change, spreading further than factories and urbanization, having a more direct impact on the daily lives of millions than railways or steamships. Yet this, one of the most dramatic events of the industrial revolution, remains largely uncharted and historians remain ignorant of the full extent of the global diffusion of the sewing machine. Any form of quantifying the impact of the sewing machine as a consumer good and how this may have impacted changes in fashions and styling of home-produced clothing has so far been almost entirely elusive.[12]

This chapter focuses on the diffusion of the sewing machine in a sample of nineteen nations, or aggregated pan-national regional jurisdictions. The different nations and regions included are: the United States, Australia and New Zealand (together), South Africa, Japan, India, the Ottoman Empire and the Philippines outside Europe; and Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, three Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden together), Spain, Portugal, and Russia within Europe.[13] These economies collectively represent over 90 percent of total world sales in this period.

Undoubtedly, the principal reason behind the absence of any statistical series on global sewing machine sales is that few national governments ever gathered such data. Values of sewing machine imports or exports typically remain hidden within larger aggregations during this period. The approach adopted here has been instead to collect firm-level sales data, a process made far simpler by the complete dominance in this period of all these markets by one firm, the Singer Manufacturing Company. The one national market where Singer held less than a three-quarter share was, almost paradoxically, its home market of the United States. But thankfully this is the one nation for which almost complete production data for the critical period were published.

The United States

Despite long antecedents in Europe, the first commercially viable sewing machine was invented in the United States. The fledgling industry was slow to develop its domestic market, not least because of the spate of legal proceedings facing all of the pioneering producers as they struggled to establish their respective patent claims. It was not until the creation of a patent pool in 1856 that the industry could focus energies on making a commercial success of the machine. An important by-product of this patent pool was the annual compilation of the total machines manufactured by all American producers from 1856 to 1876, when the last of the relevant patents expired.[14] This annual series was published in an article attributed to Singer's later president, Frederick G. Bourne, and so, for the early years of the industry's development, the total American industry output is known.[15] Moreover, because of the very primitive nature of the European sewing machine industry before 1876, the series is a very close approximation to global output.

There were, to be sure, many dozens of European sewing machine manufacturers in the 1860s and 1870s, but, and in common with many of the smaller American producers, they were actually little more than general machine tool manufacturers, where total annual output of sewing machines was measured in dozens not hundreds or thousands. The specialists prevailed and European sewing machine producers in the mid-century, like the British firm James Starley and the French firm Peugeot, quit the industry to move more successfully into bicycle production from the late 1860s onwards.[16]

There were some European specialists, but, in these years, they remained small, their growth stifled in part by Singer's decision to build a sewing machine factory in Glasgow in 1867. Exploiting the best of American production technology, but not hampered by high American wages, Singer's Scottish output was not only far more competitive than any of the indigenous European producers, but also more competitive than the exported output of other US producers.[17]

For the industry's early years until the late 1880s global output was dominated by the American manufacturers, their total sales were surely in around of 95 percent of total world output.[18] For the purposes of estimating the diffusion of the sewing machine through the American national market, Bourne's series of US manufacturers' annual output is therefore not only a close approximation to global output, but, if allowance is made for both exports from the US and Singer's Scottish output, it becomes a very close approximation to domestic US sales. These calculations appear in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 indicates that the US market for the sewing machine remained under-developed until after the Civil War, but that from then until the 1872 peak, sales growth was nothing short of remarkable, illustrated in Figure 1.1.

The steepness of the sales curve after 1866 in Figure 1.1 indicates that the post–Civil War growth was the determining feature of the development of the US market. This was associated with the emergence of what the sewing machine producers called the "Family" market. In 1862, only around one in four American sewing machines was bought for home use, despite sewing machine manufacturers' best attempts in advertising to this market.[19]

The combination of extensive and increasingly liberal credit arrangements, blanket sales coverage (initially through independent agents and then increasingly through tied and then

Table 1.1 Sewing Machines Sales in the United States, 1853–1879 (machines per annum)

1853	2,529
1854	4,269
1855	3,507
1856	7,223
1857	12,713
1858	17,589
1859	46,208
1860	38,102
1861	34,556
1862	36,598
1863	39,808
1864	47,692
1865	45,497
1866	62,092
1867	156,378
1868	215,321
1869	288,537
1870	423,094
1871	646,485
1872	770,037
1873	586,958
1874	409,158
1875	410,631
1876	450,163
1877	490,000
1878	530,000
1879	570,000

Source: Godley "Global Diffusion," Table 1.1.[4]

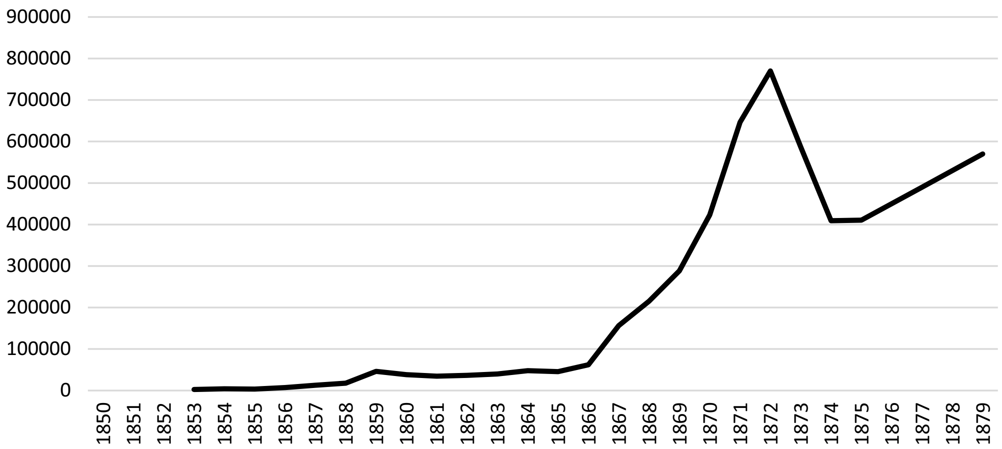

Figure 1.1 Sewing Machine Unit Sales in the United States.

Source: Table 1.1.

producer-controlled distribution channels), and rising consumer prosperity (complemented by a particular push from women's demand for more fashionable styles of clothing) meant that consumer demand became utterly dominant. Millions of American families were responsible for the remarkable increase in sales from 1865 to 1872.[20] Sales grew more than tenfold from the end of the Civil War to 1872, before the 1873 downturn.[21] Alas, the statistical series ends before 1880, but this is less of a disadvantage than it might at first appear. The purpose of drawing together these international estimates of consumer sewing machine sales is to approximate its international diffusion. So rapid was the post–Civil War sales growth, that this process was essentially completed in the USA before 1879. Diffusion slowed after the 1872 sales peak, suggesting that most of the potential market had already purchased a machine before 1880.[22]

Moving away from the US market to chart the sales of sewing machines elsewhere requires above all an awareness of the sales of the American producers outside their domestic market. As already noted, non-US producers remained relatively unimportant at least until the late 1880s. US export data indicate how American producers targeted foreign markets during the early 1860s, when domestic demand was stifled and when the Civil War dollar depreciation gave US producers a price advantage abroad. However, as the dollar regained parity in the post-war period, high labor costs outweighed any product advantage, and US exports fell from an annual average of around $2 million from 1865 to 1870 to only around $1.6–1.7 million from 1874 to 1880.[23] With unit prices falling, volume exports declined by less, but the result was the same; American sewing machine manufacturers lost competitiveness. Nevertheless, American dominance of world markets actually increased, though this was entirely through the activities of Singer and its remarkably prescient direct investment in Scotland.

Singer began its Scottish operations in 1867. This first overseas investment—a simple assembly workshop—was an experimental affair, although a combination of booming domestic demand and fast-growing sales in Britain and Germany prompted the firm to open a fully fledged sewing machine factory in Glasgow in 1869, which very quickly became the equal to the one in New York. What made Singer's Scottish investment so extraordinary was that it was predicated on a realization that for the company to be successful in foreign markets it needed the cost-benefit of cheaper Scottish labor.[24] This strategy, of establishing a foreign factory as an export platform, was years, perhaps decades, ahead of any other firm. The point needs emphasizing because Singer's Scottish investment gave the company a stranglehold over world markets. Singer also pioneered the creation of its global selling system from the late 1870s. This was developed first in its British territory, then, after seeing its success in Britain, it was exported to western and southern Europe, then to central and eastern European markets, and then throughout most of the world.[25] The combination of manufacturing at great scale and saturation selling gave Singer its dominance of global markets. For the historian, this is very fortunate because it enables the historian to use the company's sales figures as a reasonable proxy for world sewing machine sales.

Growing sales enabled the company to invest in a rapid expansion of its own distribution channels. In 1867, Singer had fifteen company-controlled sales offices outside the USA: Belfast and Dublin in Ireland; Dundee and Glasgow in Scotland; Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Northampton in England; Berlin, Bremen, Breslau, Frankfurt, and Hamburg in Germany; and Stockholm in Sweden. Apart from Paris, these cities were all the leading European clothing industry centers.[26] As in the United States, however, it was consumer demand that added momentum to sales growth in foreign markets. As this foreign demand grew, it was supplied overwhelmingly by Glasgow output. In 1868, over half of Singer's foreign sales were already met by Glasgow machines in what was only the first full year of the factory's operations, the New York home base supplying the balance. In 1869, New York's share of foreign sales had fallen further to around 30 percent.[27] While the New York factory was released to concentrate on the dramatic growth in domestic US demand, the Glasgow-manufactured Singer machines gave the company the necessary price competitiveness in foreign markets.

For almost all non-US markets, Singer had allowed two fairly autonomous sales organizations to emerge and divide up the world between them. Very few export markets were directly controlled by the New York head office until the mid-1890s, only Canada, the Caribbean, and some Latin American markets. This was indicative of the head office's primary concern with the US domestic market, a focus that enabled Singer's British and German agents to establish their own foreign sales organizations. The London agency expanded into most of Western and Southern Europe (covering France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy), the British Empire (especially Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, and India) and beyond, with UK-controlled sales agencies established in the Philippines, China, and Japan.

The Hamburg agency essentially covered what was left of the sewing machine buying world, opening distribution channels in all of Central and Eastern Europe (including Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Russian Empire), Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and the Ottoman Empire. This needs to be mentioned because the quality of statistical data is dependent on their sources. In a word, the quality of data is less satisfactory for the nations covered by the Hamburg agency than the London one. The following tables therefore reflect Singer's organization of its international selling up until the mid-1890s.

Great Britain and Ireland

Singer established its sales network in the United Kingdom earlier than any competitor and increased its retail outlets there from the nine already noted in 1867 to 464 by

1885.[28] In Table 1.2, Singer's UK sales are reported, moreover, because for most of these years company sources give UK regional sales, it has been possible to break down the UK figures separately into British and Irish sales.[29]

Sales in Britain and Ireland grew quickly from the early 1870s through to 1890, as Figure 1.2 shows, with total sales trebling from 1879 to 1890 alone. Thereafter, sales

Table 1.2 Singer Sewing Machine Sales, United Kingdom, Great Britain and Ireland, 1871–1914

Year	*UK*	*GB*	*Ireland*
1871	10,900	10,250	650
1872	18,200	17,100	1,100
1873	19,300	18,150	1,150
1874	24,800	23,300	1,500
1875	30,300	28,500	1,800
1876	35,800	33,650	2,150
1877	41,300	38,800	2,500
1878	46,800	44,000	2,800
1879	52,300	49,200	3,100
1880	62,252	58,502	3,750
1881	67,417	63,588	3,829
1882	79,815	75,321	4,494
1883	85,936	81,402	4,534
1884	91,411	85,767	5,644
1885	88,732	83,454	5,278
1886	82,432	77,277	5,155
1887	91,217	85,340	5,877
1888	98,547	92,525	6,022
1889	127,266	119,925	7,341
1890	150,008	140,870	9,138
1891	145,901	135,573	1,0328
1892	146,561	136,179	10,382
1893	138,589	128,301	10,288
1894	146,452	136,257	10,195
1895	143,334	133,233	10,101
1896	133,442	124,690	8,752
1897	133,408	123,688	9,720
1898	139,767	129,080	10,687
1899	165,549	152,764	12,785
1900	164,980	153,571	11,409
1901	155,358	148,926	6,432
1902	150,936	142,682	8,254
1903	136,622	127,696	8,926
1904	130,290	120,692	9,598
1905	142,659	132,389	10,270
1906	168,737	156,587	12,150
1907	163,976	152,498	11,478
1908	128,396	119,408	8,988
1909	136,349	126,805	9,544
1910	130,726	121,575	9,151
1911	129,173	120,131	9,042
1912	137,654	128,018	9,636
1913	142,026	132,084	9,942
1914	138,703	128,994	9,709

Source: Godley "Global Diffusion," Table 1.2.[9–10]

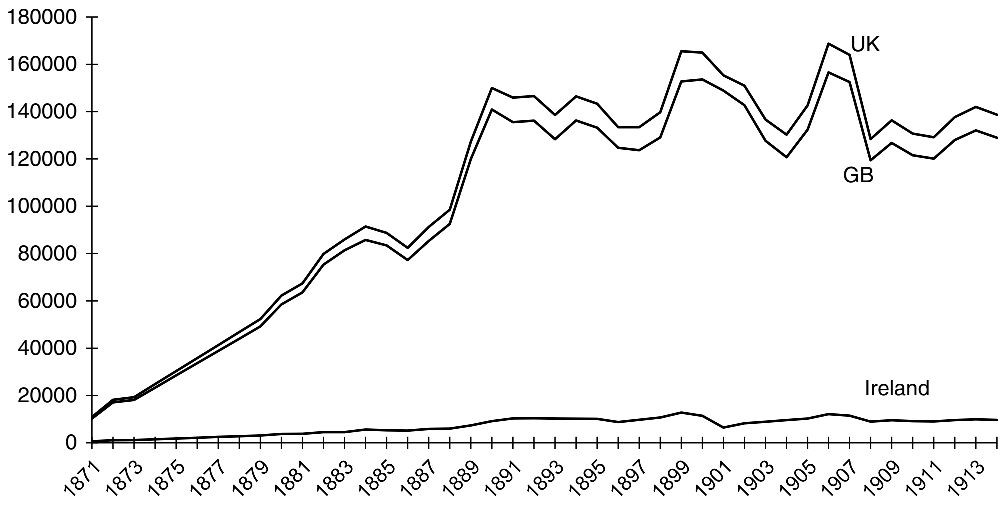

Figure 1.2 Singer's Sales in the United Kingdom, Great Britain, and Ireland, 1971–1914.
Source: Table 1.2.

were far more stable, varying from 130,000 to a peak (in 1906) of 168,000 machines per annum. Irish sales were only a small fraction of these but they also grew quickly to peak in 1899 at well over three times their 1881 level. UK sales never attained the scale of US sales, but given the disparity in the two nations' populations by the century's end, that is hardly surprising.

Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australasia

Table 1.3 lists the annual sales for all the countries outside the UK covered by the London agency.

These nations cover an enormous area of the globe with so many differences in the underlying demand conditions that the huge variation in sales is unsurprising. Nevertheless, Figure 1.3 does indicate that the French, Italian, and Spanish markets were much larger than elsewhere, although Australia was important throughout. Other regions, such as India and the Philippines, started very small but then saw very rapid growth in the years before 1920.[30]

Table 1.4 lists the sales in the regions where Singer's distribution channels were controlled by its Hamburg agency. Hamburg controlled Central and Eastern European sales until the mid-1890s, from which time national sales organizations were formed, each reporting directly to the New York head office. For the period up until the late-1890s Hamburg's control has the unfortunate consequence of limiting the extant data on sewing machine sales in different national territories because most of these regions were aggregated together in the Hamburg office's reports for the 1880s and early 1890s. The one exception, however, is the Russian series, which is complete. This limitation in the sources has led to some necessary aggregation in the regions presented here. The annual sales for Japan have also been added to Table 1.4 (and Figure 1.4). The Japanese market

Table 1.3 Singer Sewing Machine Sales in Selected Counties, 1875–1920 – London Agency

Year	*France*	*Belgium*	*Switzerland*	*Spain*	*Portugal*	*Italy*	*Australia/NZ*	*South Africa*	*India*	*Philippines*
1875	11,000			5,000	1,000					
1876	12,000	1,000		6,000	1,500				20	
1877	15,000	2,000	500	8,000	2,000	3,000	2,000	300	30	
1878	15,000	3,000	500	12,000	2,500	5,000	3,000	500	70	
1879	17,500	4,000	1,000	16,000	3,000	7,000	4,000	700	130	
1880	22,500	5,064	2,102	19,205	3,961	7,500	4,550	750	250	
1881	24,842	5,239	2,700	24,160	5,521	8,981	9,574	1,354	552	
1882	26,144	5,409	2,424	18,747	5,500	10,001	18,136	812	515	
1883	26,375	5,567	2,418	20,847	4,638	12,514	18,991	760	1,088	278
1884	25,695	5,667	3,087	21,349	3,708	12,920	17,801	1,203	1,607	674
1885	28,315	6,064	3,354	17,900	3,768	12,486	13,546	1,767	1,761	494
1886	28,900	6,200	3,457	19,285	3,894	11,900	12,316	1,950	2,012	600
1887	29,500	6,350	3,284	19,369	3,911	11,350	13,158	2,140	2,131	700
1888	30,013	6,492	3,020	21,406	4,322	10,806	13,000	2,327	2,966	782
1889	35,096	6,765	2,965	23,927	4,831	15,726	13,000	3,170	3,578	1,220
1890	40,091	7,807	3,328	26,590	5,065	18,010	13,000	3,627	3,763	1,195
1891	42,891	7,470	3,704	29,165	5,562	20,001	13,000	3,473	4,145	1,074
1892	45,263	7,185	4,116	28,213	6,257	24,592	13,000	4,362	4,824	970
1893	48,178	8,167	4,314	23,500	6,500	21,518	13,081	4,300	5,770	1,100
1894	51,751	8,339	4,974	24,000	6,750	22,230	12,877	4,300	6,720	1,240
1895	52,595	8,837	5,271	24,000	7,000	22,755	13,420	5,300	7,670	1,380
1896	56,132	9,785	5,831	24,000	7,250	27,680	14,654	6,300	8,620	1,520
1897	58,342	10,101	6,433	20,500	7,500	34,650	15,331	7,300	9,570	1,660

(*Continued*)

Table 1.3 (Continued)

Year	*France*	*Belgium*	*Switzerland*	*Spain*	*Portugal*	*Italy*	*Australia/NZ*	*South Africa*	*India*	*Philippines*
1898	58,042	10,507	7,002	22,734	7,956	34,503	18,000	8,300	10,500	1,800
1899	68,330	11,333	7,425	31,038	8,696	37,634	20,670	9,300	11,470	1,940
1900	72,349	11,473	7,430	32,331	9,986	37,041	23,340	10,300	12,420	2,080
1901	74,987	11,642	7,440	36,083	8,965	33,944	26,010	11,300	13,352	2,220
1902	82,048	11,171	7,449	45,243	10,210	40,154	28,673	12,274	13,351	2,357
1903	86,973	11,241	7,666	48,694	11,135	43,435	25,432	14,672	15,842	1,937
1904	88,936	11,842	7,602	45,092	10,864	49,970	27,558	11,196	17,781	1,350
1905	93,528	12,446	8,373	39,916	10,460	51,894	26,066	12,220	18,075	1,612
1906	98,772	12,938	8,907	43,449	10,647	56,325	26,965	10,844	17,331	1,435
1907	107,514	13,675	9,264	44,313	10,705	67,219	29,593	8,662	20,478	2,067
1908	110,899	13,561	8,342	43,702	10,568	71,724	29,194	6,796	20,159	2,241
1909	115,129	14,862	8,477	43,918	11,367	70,444	29,369	7,781	20,873	2,642
1910	112,303	15,655	8,522	52,020	11,613	78,182	31,546	10,523	24,855	4,120
1911	111,566	16,535	8,394	61,229	13,732	94,308	34,088	11,888	26,582	14,366
1912	123,833	18,330	8,790	75,413	16,491	110,792	30,527	12,944	36,481	17,714
1913	126,320	19,288	7,832	72,580	16,654	110,665	29,458	14,486	44,819	27,266
1914	114,000	17,350	7,050	67,201	15,420	97,817	26,582	13,250	41,437	16,520
1915				64,844			24,883		51,300	21,500
1916	59,886	3,050	7,018	67,406	15,103	57,572	29,987	19,203	61,296	26,397
1917										35,600
1918	58,668	250	7,435	44,290	21,016	41,324	24,451	23,291	43,058	44,820
1919	112,016	25,140	9,167	62,482	23,785	65,369	30,384	22,234	56,731	36,047
1920	97,722	21,225	9,863	60,806	13,658	30,161	28,659	19,479	53,732	33,656

Source: Godley "Global Diffusion," Table 1.3.[12]

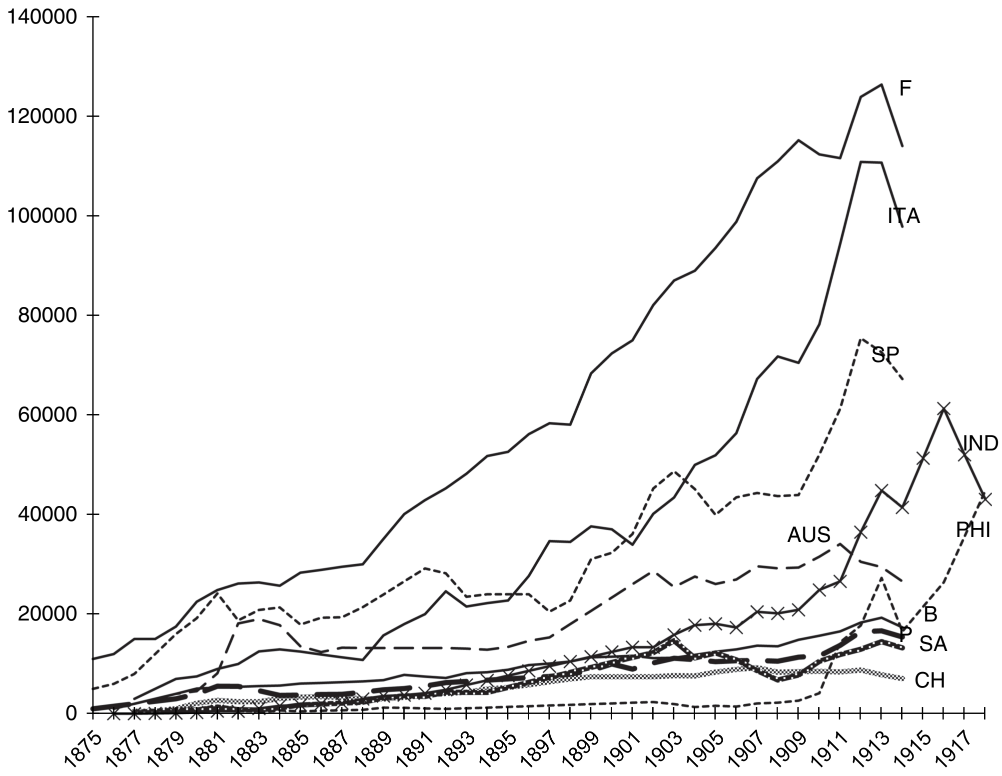

Figure 1.3 Singer Sewing Machine Sales in Selected Counties, 1875–1920 – London Agency.
Source: Table 1.3.

developed after the New York head office reasserted control over its global sales offices, and so its sales figures were reported separately.[31]

Figure 1.4 shows how the Russian market in particular grew spectacularly. It became the single most important market for sewing machines outside the United States by 1913, far outstripping demand in all other European and Asian markets. It also shows that sales in the Ottoman Empire grew quickly until 1914 but then collapsed, and that Japanese sales grew quickly especially after World War I.

Figures 1.1 to 1.4 together testify to the remarkable global diffusion of the sewing machine—and specifically the Singer sewing machine—during these years. Chronologically the figures confirm that sales to families took off first in the United States after the US Civil War, before seeing fast growth in Great Britain and Ireland in the 1870s and 1880, then western and southern Europe in the 1880s and 1890s. But sales accelerated quite dramatically in the years after 1910 in Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Japan, India, and the Philippines. This demonstrates that consumption patterns had begun to change in these emerging economies as well in the years before 1920. If the sewing machine permitted the adoption of different styles of clothing, with more stitching and so more tailored jackets, shirts, blouses, and skirts than in pre-machine forms of clothing, then this transformation of clothing styles may well have occurred across a far wider range of countries and households than currently thought.

Table 1.4 Singer Sewing Machine Sales in Selected Counties, 1868–1920 – Hamburg Agency and Japan

Year	*Germany & Austria-Hungary*	*Russia*	*Scandinavia*	*Holland*	*Japan*	*Ottoman & Balkans*
1868	4,010					
1869	6,570					
1870	12,000					
1871	17,500					
1872	22,500					
1873	30,000					
1874	36,000					
1875	43,000					
1876	50,000					
1877	50,300	6,800	900	1,000		
1878	53,100	12,500	1,200	1,200		
1879	54,900	18,800	1,500	1,800		
1880	80,200	22,300	1,800	2,000		70
1881	90,100	27,262	2,650	2,650		200
1882	107,300	31,600	5,700	5,600		400
1883	114,200	35,400	6,800	6,700		1,000
1884	128,200	36,200	8,600	8,400		2,000
1885	85,000	41,200	9,400	8,520		2,000
1886	70,000	31,200	10,200	8,640		3,000
1887	70,000	32,300	11,000	8,760		2,000
1888	70,000	52,200	11,800	8,880		1,000
1889	75,000	48,100	12,600	9,000		3,400
1890	89,300	42,000	13,400	9,120		5,400
1891	83,600	40,700	14,200	9,240		5,800
1892	87,000	46,100	14,922	9,360		7,000
1893	96,700	56,200	14,800	9,480		8,500
1894	98,373	65,000	14,718	9,600		11,000
1895	118,541	68,788	17,700	9,720		13,500
1896	127,056	72,000	19,750	9,850		14,800
1897	133,937	85,910	19,850	10,500		16,000
1898	144,983	92,369	19,850	11,200		17,800
1899	157,565	99,444	19,850	11,900		19,000
1900	164,798	110,316	19,850	12,500		20,500
1901	165,394	128,249	19,998	13,209		23,448
1902	172,969	132,266	20,281	13,453		30,069
1903	190,345	182,668	22,920	14,612	6,529	37,729
1904	201,986	202,592	26,319	16,095	7,619	46,042
1905	224,022	310,881	29,799	17,714	9,348	46,187
1906	257,671	376,336	36,005	21,009	12,895	52,706
1907	258,749	413,905	39,935	21,124	17,421	53,900
1908	254,091	446,151	41,366	19,612	10,785	51,254
1909	254,048	481,796	43,327	19,048	9,232	54,463
1910	262,415	505,066	45,675	19,559	14,527	66,757
1911	268,082	504,489	44,738	20,347	20,820	84,623
1912	278,909	570,371	45,921	22,693	33,894	88,509
1913	275,367	675,174	47,815	23,814	24,038	78,415
1914	248,000	678,986	43,000	21,500	19,404	78,000
1915					11,510	3,177

(*Continued*)

Table 1.4 (Continued)

Year	*Germany & Austria-Hungary*	*Russia*	*Scandinavia*	*Holland*	*Japan*	*Ottoman & Balkans*
1916	103,670	353,363	60,350	25,015	20,976	26,886
1917					30,305	
1918		4,709	20,887	12,306	50,067	21,002
1919		29,392	48,466	26,016	58,086	41,214
1920			43,356	31,234	45,491	33,477

Source: Godley, "Global Diffusion," Table 1.4, 14 and Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers*, 51 (and original data supplied)

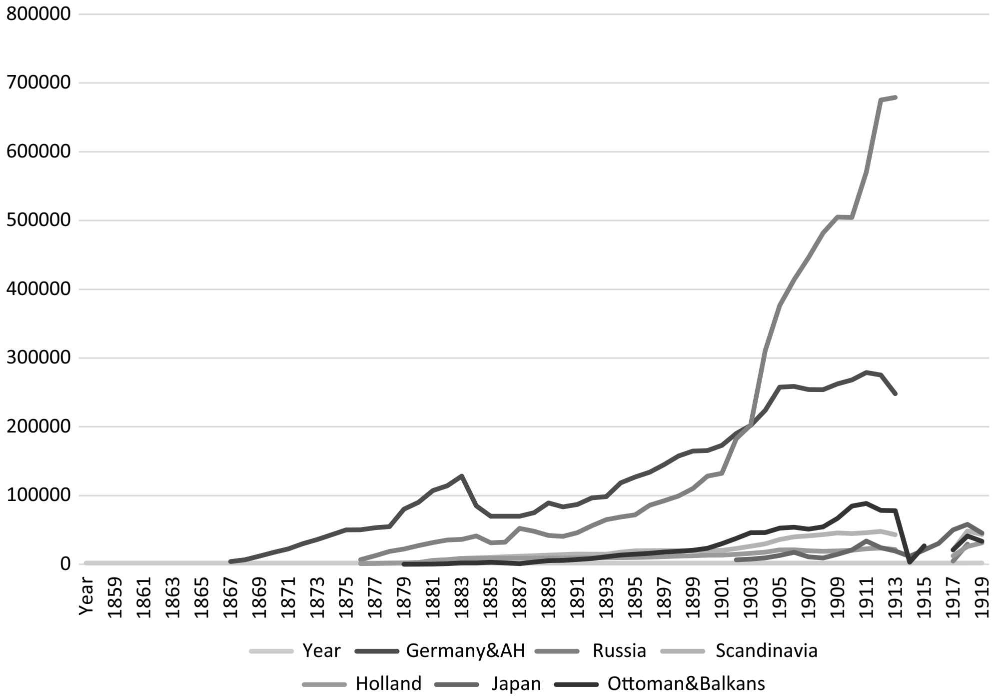

Figure 1.4 Singer Sewing Machine Sales in Selected Counties – Hamburg Agency and Japan.
Source: Table 1.4.

The Diffusion of the Sewing Machine as a Consumer Good

Tables 1.1 to 1.4 provide what is likely to be the best estimate of total sales of sewing machines across these various regions for the period. For the United States, the figures are estimates of the sales of all sewing machines. But for all the other regions, the estimates are of Singer sewing machines. As such they under-estimate the total sales in these regions. But by how much they under-estimate total sales in very difficult to measure. The justification of pursuing this approach is precisely that Singer was the dominant provider of sewing machines across all these markets for essentially all this period, with Singer's total sales very likely to have been 75 to 80 percent of total sales in these regions. In Russia, the market share has been estimated to be 90 percent. By contrast, Singer's sales in India are estimated to be a little over half total machines.[32] The net result is that the estimates of annual sales of total sewing machines in any single country are inevitably somewhat imprecise. This consequence of the paucity of historical data means that the lack of precision in our estimates must lead to some conservatism in the overall interpretation of the results. Conceptually, however, comparing total annual sales across different countries is less helpful than comparing per capita sales. Furthermore, because the sewing machine was a durable good, and so purchased for the purpose of using over many years, a much more useful indicator of relative use of sewing machines is to focus on the cumulative sales per capita in each country, or the diffusion of the sewing machine throughout these regions. This is plotted in Figure 1.5.[33]

Some very obvious features in Figure 1.5 stand out. First, diffusion was first and fastest in the nation of invention, the United States. It is apparent that sewing machine consumption passed the threshold of one percent of the population in 1865 (or ten per thousand population on the Figure's vertical axis). Within ten years well over 10 percent of the American population owned a sewing machine, or probably the equivalent of over half of all US households. This suggests that the rate of diffusion would have peaked (the number of new households available to buy a machine was diminishing) and so annual sales would likely have peaked at that point and probably roughly stabilized thereafter as the number of recently arrived immigrant households kept adding to the pool of potential buyers. Nowhere else matched this rate of diffusion. Looking at the diffusion of Singer-only machines, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand had the next-highest diffusion levels by 1914, followed by a whole clutch of European nations.[34] In the 1870s and early 1880s, Germany had been the leading European consumer of sewing machines after Britain. By 1914, however, Ireland, Netherlands, France, Switzerland, and Scandinavia had all overtaken Germany and Austria-Hungary, with Belgium, Portugal,

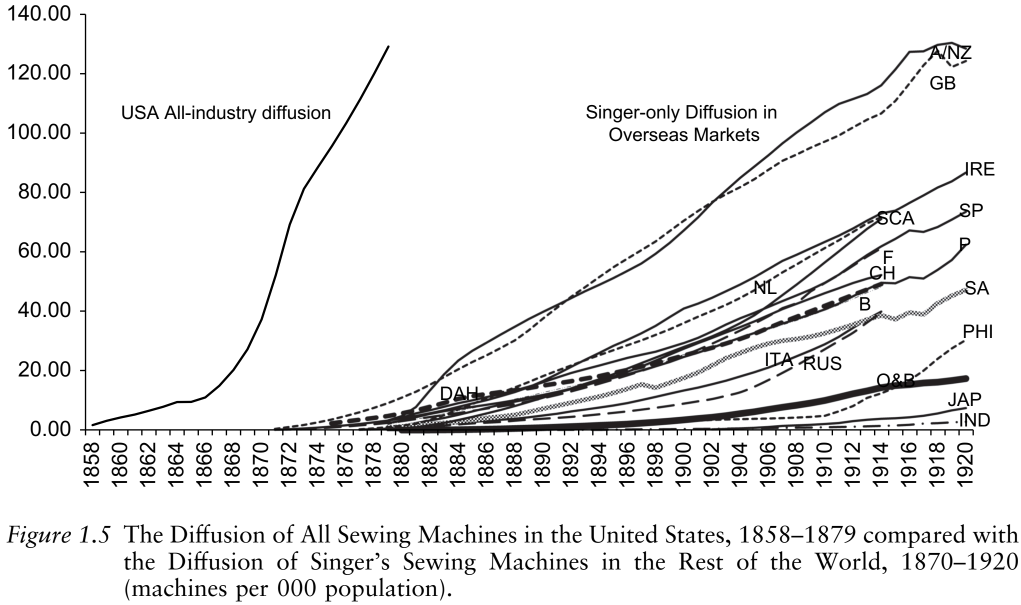

Figure 1.5 The Diffusion of All Sewing Machines in the United States, 1858–1879 compared with the Diffusion of Singer's Sewing Machines in the Rest of the World, 1870–1920 (machines per 000 population).

and Spain close behind. Italy and Russia were latecomers to the sewing machine across continental Europe, diffusion not really beginning there until the mid-1880s. Despite their relative late start and slow initial diffusion through the 1890s, both Italy and Russia experienced very rapid diffusion after 1903–1904.

Outside Europe, there was a marked difference between the economically advanced and high-consumption New World nations of the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, and the relatively poorer, low-consumption nations of Japan, India, and the Philippines. The contrast can, however, be overstated, because by the end of this period some of these emerging economies outside Europe were experiencing dramatic increases in sewing machine consumption. Mineral-led economic growth in South Africa from the 1890s may well have prompted fairly rapid diffusion there to reach levels close to the European norm after the Boer War (1899–1902). Perhaps more surprising are the cases of Japan, the Philippines, the Ottoman Empire, and the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire and the Balkans were dominated by sales to Turkey and Greece, nations normally considered to have been economically backward at this time. From negligible beginnings in the 1880s, by 1910, 1.5 percent, and by 1913, 2 percent, of the population had machines. There is very little information on relative household sizes in these less developed nations but, assuming that households were typically larger there than in the four- to five-person household of Western Europe, then over 10 percent of households had sewing machines in Turkey and Greece before World War I.[35]

In the Philippines, diffusion crossed the 2 percent of the population threshold in 1917, and reached 2.5 percent by 1918. If Filipino household size was similar to European, then over 12.5 percent of households had bought a sewing machine in the Philippines by 1918. Japanese diffusion reached 7.4 machines per thousand of the population (or just under 1 percent of the population) by 1920. If Japanese household size was also at least as large as European, this translates into nearly 4 percent of Japanese households having bought a Singer sewing machine by 1920. By contrast, Indian diffusion remained insignificant almost throughout. Only by 1916 had Indian diffusion even reached 0.2 machines per hundred of the population, perhaps somewhere around 1 percent of households.

The first purpose of this chapter is now complete and the estimates of the global diffusion of the sewing machine have been presented. It was almost everywhere rapid. Not as rapid as the remarkable post-bellum diffusion in the United States. But it was certainly comparable to the later diffusion of consumer goods in the twentieth century such as the telephone, vacuum cleaner, or washing machine.[36] Outside of the United States, there are five groups within which nations and regions show chronologically similar patterns of diffusion. First were GB and Australia and New Zealand, followed by all western and northern European nations as well as Spain and Portugal. Third were the late starting but rapidly growing diffusion patterns of Italy and Russia. Fourth were the rapidly growing emerging economies like South Africa, Philippines, and then finally the Ottoman region, Japan, and India lagged behind. The implication for fashion historians is that the diffusion of the sewing machine by 1920 in all these countries (apart from India) was sufficiently large that there must have been a significant and observable impact on the volumes and stylings of home-produced clothing.

Focusing on broad groupings of chronological patterns of diffusion has the benefit of reducing any misinterpretation arising from any error caused by the proxy of Singer sewing machine sales being dissimilar from total sales in any single market and to different degrees. For example, even if Singer's market share in, say, Switzerland was greater or less than in, say, Scandinavia, the range of any plausible differences would not dramatically change the fact that the diffusion of sewing machines in Switzerland (and Scandinavia) was later and lower than in, say, Great Britain and the United States. Or, equally, adjusting Russia's pattern of diffusion to account for any plausible range of Singer's market share would not change the conclusion that diffusion began later and then accelerated much more quickly than when compared with the rest of Europe.

Diffusion and Income

Now that we have broad estimates for the diffusion of the sewing machine across these regions, we can begin to seek some initial explanations for the differences shown in Figure 1.5. While income differences are the biggest determinant of consumer adoption of durables, income alone cannot account for lags from one region to another. Marketing strategies, price variations, household formation, and cultural differences are only the most obvious additional variables influencing differential rates of diffusion. Nevertheless, the few accounts of early diffusion do endorse the view that per capita income was the primary determinant of expenditure on consumer durables.[37] It is therefore a reasonable prior assumption that the observed variations in the historical adoption of the family sewing machine were related to differences in per capita incomes.

Figure 1.6 shows this relationship in this sample of 19 regions by plotting real per capita income in these nations when the first 0.2 percent, 1 percent, 2 percent, and 4 percent of their populations bought sewing machines. These diffusion thresholds will approximately correspond for most countries with a household diffusion level of 1 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, and 20 percent.[38]

The chart shows different societies attaining different levels of sewing machine consumption over time. Essentially, it is presenting four chronological snapshots of per capita consumption levels from Figure 1.5. The United States passed these points first, followed by Britain, Germany, and Australia, then by a large group of European countries, including Ireland, France, Switzerland, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, and the Iberian Peninsula. Italy and Russia were consistently the European laggards. Finally, the other non-European nations lagged further, India passing the 0.2 percent threshold only in 1916, over 30 years later than Russia.

Figure 1.6 depicts how this historical process of increasing consumption levels was sensitive to income levels by plotting diffusion against per capita real wages. If diffusion was related solely to per capita income, the trend lines on Figure 1.6 would be horizontal. If real wages increased to any given point, consumer expenditure would also have increased (assuming constant savings rates) giving a near-constant level of sewing machine diffusion across the different nations for any given level of income. Figure 1.6 shows that this was very clearly not the case. The trend lines are all downward sloping. It can be concluded that income alone was not determining rates of diffusion across all the different countries.

Interpreting the downward-sloping trend lines is not straightforward, however. The ability of families in later adopting nations to purchase sewing machines at lower income levels was not dependent on falling prices over time. There were significant reductions in the mean price for a sewing machine in the years under consideration here, but these reductions were essentially confined to the mid-1870s and so preceded the period in the figure. Thereafter, Singer kept its sewing machine prices fairly constant both over time and across nations. The two main exceptions to this were the United States and

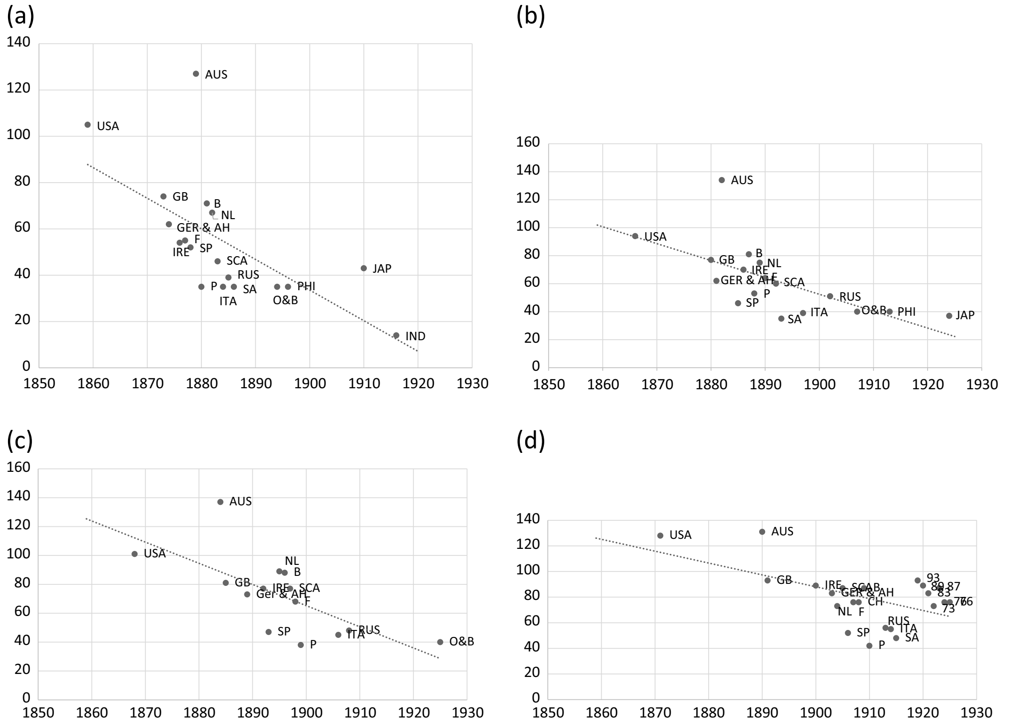

Figure 1.6 A. Regional attainment of 0.2% Per Capita Sewing Machine Diffusion and Per Capita Income 1850–1920. B. Regional attainment of 1.0% Per Capita Sewing Machine Diffusion and Per Capita Income 1866–1925. C. Regional attainment of 2.0% Per Capita Sewing Machine Diffusion and Per Capita Income 1868–1925. D. Regional attainment of 4.0% Per Capita Sewing Machine Diffusion and Per Capita Income 1871–1925.

Sources: Sources. Per capita income (vertical axis) is and index from Williamson, 'Global Labor Markets', where the per capita income for GB in 1900 = 100 – see note 30.

Australasia, where the typical sewing machine price remained above (US) $50 from the early 1880s onwards. Elsewhere the mean price from 1880 was nearly half that at around $30 per machine.[39] Nevertheless, the high New World prices must explain at least in part why diffusion there was at considerably higher income levels than in the developed European nations. Conversely, the absence of any sewing machine price reductions in the emerging economies mean that some other reason must explain its adoption at lower income levels there.[40]

It is also unlikely that Singer's international marketing strategies were in any way responsible for the speedier adoption of the machine in lower income nations. Review of the company's internal accounts reveal that it never engaged in price-cutting strategies in emerging markets, nor did its policy of investing in distribution channels follow anything other than a simple formula based on sales growth.[41]

Another way of interpreting the downward-sloping trend lines across the four diffusion thresholds in Figure 1.6 is to separate the different countries and regions into different groups. It has already been noted that Singer sewing machine prices were higher in the United States and Australia than in the rest of the world, so for the purposes of pursuing a systematic comparison it is important to concentrate on those countries and regions where the machine prices were constant.

These countries, all but the USA and Australia and New Zealand, can be grouped into four different groups. The first group would be the early adopting countries in northern and Western Europe – Great Britain, Ireland, Germany (and Austria Hungary), France, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and the aggregated region of the three Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. This group of countries was where the Singer selling system was first rolled out from the very late 1870s and into the 1880s.[42] What is very notable when comparing the relationship between per capita income and the different diffusion thresholds in Figure 1.6 across this group of countries is that the variation in income fell over time and as successive diffusion thresholds were passed.[43] The relationship across these early-adopting European countries between income and diffusion became stronger over time.

The second group of countries would include just Spain and Portugal. Both Spain and Portugal belong to the first group of countries when the chronology of the introduction of the Singer selling system is considered, they were both early adopters of the sewing machine. But in striking contrast to the rest of the European regions, the relationship between income and diffusion in Spain and Portugal was very different. Spanish and Portuguese diffusion crossed the 1 percent, the 2 percent, and the 4 percent thresholds at much lower income levels than compared to the rest of Europe, and this difference in income levels associated with diffusion thresholds compared with the rest of European early adopting countries increased over time. While income levels may have been increasingly important in determining diffusion levels across the rest of the European early adopters, the pattern in Spain and Portugal was for diffusion to happen at lower income levels. Spanish and Portuguese incomes were just over 70 percent of the mean incomes of the first group of nations for both the 0.2 and 1 percent diffusion thresholds, but this fell to 54 percent and 57 percent of the first group of nations for the 2 and 4 percent diffusion thresholds. Why were Spanish and Portuguese families becoming increasingly likely to buy a sewing machine for any given level of income than when compared with their northern and Western European peers? Income alone was becoming a less important determinant of sewing machine demand there. The likely inference is that something non-income related was increasingly acting as an additional spur to Spanish and Portuguese families purchasing sewing machines. This observation deserves more research. Given the initial proposition of this chapter, that almost all demand for the sewing machine was consumer demand, and that this was itself derived from the demand for home-produced clothing, the obvious question for fashion historians to explore is whether or not Spanish and Portuguese families built a much stronger preference for more home-produced clothing than their north and west European peers? Furthermore, given that it is reasonable to infer that it was the relatively high-income families that bought sewing machines first, this is a pattern of behavior that is focused on the differences between middle class families' preferences for home-produced clothing in Spain and Portugal when compared with similar families in northern and Western Europe for any given income level. This implies that Spanish and Portuguese middle class culture was behaving differently to that in north and west European nations.

The next observation from Figure 1.6 is that the mean per capita income associated with each threshold of sewing machine diffusion in the rapidly growing economies of Italy, Russia, South Africa, the Ottoman region, Japan, and Philippines (the third group of regions) was also significantly lower than in west and north Europe. These regions were different to Spain and Portugal because they adopted the sewing machine significantly later than in the two groups of early adopting regions. The countries and regions in this group were by any measure far more diverse than among the two early-adopting European groups. But the income levels associated with each diffusion threshold within this group were broadly similar, and actually much more similar to the income levels seen in Spanish and Portuguese diffusion.[44] Once again therefore the suggestion is that middle-class families in these regions also displayed a stronger preference for home-produced clothing than their peers in the countries of the Western and northern European industrializing core for any given income level. Furthermore, given that typical family clothing style preferences were very different across the nations in this group—the typical Japanese middle-class family would have had very different clothing styles to the typical middle class South African, Turkish and Greek, Filipino, Russian, or Italian families—the similarity in income levels across these nations for each diffusion threshold is puzzling. Given the differences in clothing styles, and in the intensity of stitching required, the initial assumption would have been that the patterns of income-related diffusion of sewing machines would have shown much greater diversity in this group. Understanding the relationship between the diffusion of the sewing machine and the transition of middle-class fashion consumption in these emerging economies in the years before 1920 would therefore be very helpful.

Finally, Figure 1.6 confirms that India was something of an outlier, and, among these 19 regions, remains in a separate grouping. While India's crossing of the initial diffusion threshold (0.2 percent of the population) was at an even lower mean income than for any other nation, the demand for sewing machines failed to take off any time before the end of the period under consideration in this chapter. This may well have been because of a preference there for non-machine stitched clothing (saris), but it may also have been associated with a stronger preference for tailor-made rather than home-produced clothing during this period.[45] Further research comparing trends in clothing production, styling, and consumption in India with other nations would, once again, be very helpful here.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this chapter has been to present the estimates on the global diffusion of the sewing machine before 1920. The value of these estimates lies in both the extent and timing of the sewing machine's diffusion and in the recognition that this diffusion was overwhelmingly as a consequence of consumer not industrial demand. The focus of the subsequent analysis here has been on relative diffusion rather than annual sales. There are important conceptual reasons for this noted above, but also important consequences for the reliability of conclusions based on the underlying firm-specific data. In particular, even if Singer's market share in some nations was somewhat less or somewhat more than in other nations, the likely impact on the overall patterns of diffusion among the different regional groupings would not change the broad conclusions.

There were striking differences in the international diffusion of the sewing machine. American diffusion was early and fast. Once appropriate distribution channels were in place, Australian diffusion followed that of the other high-income nation, Britain.[46] The countries of the western and northern industrializing European core showed broadly similar diffusion paths when controlling for income levels. It is, however, with the nations on Europe's periphery and beyond that these data are most valuable. These nations, Russia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, Japan, South Africa, India, and the Philippines, are nations which experienced varying degrees of integration into the world economy in the years immediately preceding and after World War I. Income levels in these countries were all lower than in the industrializing European core. In all these countries, sewing machine consumption accelerated and it diffused through these societies at relatively low income levels. This suggests that the demand for home-produced clothing, and the underlying demand for home-produced fashion that this expresses, was greater relative to income levels in these societies than in the more advanced ones.

This has important implications for fashion historians. It suggests that during the period between around 1870 and 1920, the transformative event in fashion was the diffusion of the sewing machine as a household, or a consumer, good. The sewing machine did impact clothing manufacturing and so it impacted the way in which manufactured and retailed clothing appeared. But its disproportionate influence was on home-produced clothing. This has not received the emphasis among fashion historians that perhaps it should.

The second implication for fashion historians is that this trend was not restricted to the more advanced world of North America and Western Europe. The diffusion of the sewing machine covered most of the globe to a quite extraordinary degree. And, moreover, as the sewing machine spread around the world, the tendency appears to have been that those families buying the machine in the less developed economies were buying their machines at significantly lower income levels. This suggests a greater preference for expressing their clothing demand and so disproportionately changing the fashion styles in these countries and regions. The obvious implication for fashion historians is that fashion was a global phenomenon by 1920, and the demand for homemade fashion was actually greater among the less developed societies than the more advanced relative to income levels. Fashion historians have occasionally conducted comparative studies, but these focus exclusively on the richer nations. These data suggest that proportionately the biggest changes in homemade fashion the diffusion of the sewing machine permitted were in fact in the faster-growing emerging economies in the years immediately before 1920. Perhaps it is to those regions that fashion historians should focus research efforts on next?

Notes

1 Godley "Singer in Britain."
2 Godley, "Technology and Fashion' and 'British and American Clothing Industries."
3 UK "Census of Production." For comparative purposes I have applied the conventional depreciation rate of 4 percent usually used for this period to convert annual sales to cumulative stock, Feinstein, *National Income*. Of course some machines would have served a dual purpose, of being both a family machine but also supporting some home-working activities. See Godley, "UK Clothing Industry," for estimates of potential non-factory, small workshop, and home-working usage.
4 "GB Agency sales, 1922–38," (Singer Archives, hereafter SA, Micro AP93–0446, unprocessed accession). Note this represents a correction to the interpretation in Godley "Singer in Britain." The Singer Archive is held by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, USA.
5 Germany, Blaich, *Amerikanische Firmen*, 28-9; Switzerland, Renoux to New York, 12.7.1901 (Box 83/10) and Table 3 above; USA, "World Sales" (Micro AP93–0444), and Godley "British and American Clothing Industries" on US clothing industry demand conditions (note this is comparing volume not value sales).

6 Coffin, "Credit, Consumption"; Gordon, ''Boundless Possibilities."
7 De la Cruz, "Multinationals and Gender"; Gordon, "Selling the American Way," and *Fabricating Consumers*; Arnold, "Global Goods"; Kupferschidt, "sewing machine."
8 Aldrich, "Cutting Practices."
9 Taylor, *Dress History*; Aldrich, "Cutting Practices"; Burman *Culture of Sewing*; Cassal-Vals, "Fashioning Modernity". De la Cruz, "Marketing the Hearth," emphasizes the importance of embroidery schools to support the adoption of sewing machines in Mexico.
10 Arnold, "Global Goods"; Russell, *Egyptian Woman*; Gordon, *Fabricating Consumers*; de la Cruz Fernandez, "Marketing the Hearth."
11 Bayly, *Modern World*.
12 Apart from partial attempts by Jack, "Channels," and Godley, "Pioneering Foreign Direct Investment," "Selling the Sewing Machine" and "Global Diffusion" (from which the data in this chapter are drawn).
13 These regional groupings have been driven by the underlying data sources. Because of data constraints, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have been considered collectively. Note that Australia includes New Zealand.
14 The figures actually refer to the number of licenses issued to firms using the protected technology. Some licenses were issued before 1856, hence the series begins in 1853. Some producers operated illegally and produced unlicensed machines, although as Davies, *Peacefully Working* points out (pp. 19–21) the members of the patent pool were not slow to pursue these rogue firms through the courts. Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that total licenses issued from 1856 corresponded very closely to annual output. See Lampe and Moser, "Patent pools."
15 Bourne, "American Sewing Machines"; and confirmed from various Company adverts through the 1860s and 1870s, see, for example, adverts c. 1870–77 (Singer Archives, hereafter SA, P92–8969, Micro 2002, reel 16).
16 Oddy, "Beautiful Ornament," 295.
17 Godley, "Pioneering Foreign Direct Investment."
18 The largest European producer, the German company Pfaff, manufactured on average 7,000 machines each year during the 1880s (ISMACS, History of Pfaff). Total American firm output would have averaged somewhere between 800,000 to one million each year of the 1880s. For example, the total US sales by 1879 were 570,000 in Table 1, and the discussion below on US diffusion levels would suggest that annual sales from then on would only slowly increase. Total US sales in the 1880s might have averaged 600,000 per annum. Singer's total global sales (see Godley, "Selling the sewing machine") averaged somewhere between 500,000 and 600,000, of which around 150,000 were sold in the US. So summing all of Singer's global sales with the total US sales (less the Singer sales in the US) would give an estimated range of 900,000 to 1,100,000 sales of US machines per year in the 1880s. Assuming sales of all US producers including Singer to be somewhere around 95% of total sales in the 1880s seems plausible.
19 Godley "British and American Clothing Industries," 68–71.
20 On credit see Calder, *American Dream*, 162-6; and more generally see Godley "Jewish Soft Loan Societies" and Godley and Ross "Banks, Networks and Small Firm Finance." For early sales organization see Jack, "Channels," Murphy, "Her Own Boss," and National Geographic Society, *Historical Atlas*, 152-3. On advertising to the family market and the growth of female fashion demand see Page Fernandez, "Creating Consumers," Campbell, "Wearily Moving," esp. 133–7, and Godley "British and American Clothing Industries."
21 The growth of family demand is testified to by Bourne, "American Sewing Machines"; Company adverts, for example, c. 1877 (SA, P92–8969 Micro 2002, reel 16); as well as Davies, *Peacefully Working*, and Putnam, "Sewing Machine," esp. 276–81.
22 Carstensen, *American enterprise*, 71, on US sales by 1914.
23 Bourne "American Sewing Machines," 536–7).
24 Godley, "Pioneering Foreign Direct Investment."
25 Godley, "Selling the Sewing Machine," Casson and Godley, "Revisiting," Godley, "Entrepreneurial opportunities." Although India had a different model – see Arnold, "Global Goods."
26 Paris being the only contemporary clothing industry center not included, see Godley "Technology and Fashion," 6. Singer had earlier licensed in independent sales agency there, a move it subsequently regretted and which influenced its desire to retain full control over its

European channels, Davies, *Peacefully Working*, 24-5. However, it did not open its own Paris outlet until the early-1870s. List of offices from Results of Business (Branches), annual, 1867–73 (SA Micro 2002, reel 16, segment 5, 22–26); and Company advert, c. 1877 (SA, P92–8969 Micro 2002, reel 16).

27 Calculated from "Results of Business (Branches), annual, 1867–73," 50, 53, and 64–5.

28 1885 UK offices from "Statement showing the ratio of Cash sales at home and foreign offices during 1885" (SA Box 103/ Folder 5). Fletcher and Godley, "British Retailing," on Singer's retail operations in the UK.

29 That is following post-1919 borders, and so demarcating Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland.

30 "World Reports to 1918" (SA, Micro AP93–0444).

31 Gordon, "Selling the American Way," and *Fabricating Consumers*. My thanks to Prof Andrew Gordon for providing these data. A small Singer outlet was temporarily opened in the early 1880s, operating under the London branch. This closed shortly after and the small volume of sales from then until the mid-180s were via independent distributors. Davies *Peacefully Working*.

32 Carstensen, *American enterprise*; Arnold, "Global Goods."

33 Population data come from Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, for GB and Ireland; Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Europe* for SP, P, ITA, F, CH, B (abbreviations following Table 3), Germany (D), Netherlands (NL), Russia (R, including Finland), Scandinavia (SCA, aggregating Denmark, Norway and Sweden), and the Balkans (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia). Mitchell *International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia and Oceana* gives South Africa (with an adjustment made here to account for the unenumerated Transvaal and Orange Free State population for pre-1904), India, Australia (with an adjustment made here to account for the unenumerated Australian aboriginal population, and including New Zealand), the Philippines (Christian population only, i.e. c. 85–90 percent of total), and Ottoman Turkey. US Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics* for the USA. Straight-line interpolations throughout for missing years. The convention is to ignore depreciation when plotting crude diffusion paths, thus overstating it slightly. See Bowden and Offer, "Household appliances."

34 Australia and New Zealand sales were reported together. Nonetheless, their per capita sales levels appear to have been similar judging from the fragments of surviving records listing the region's disaggregated sales. See, for instance, "Comparative Summary of Business, Australasian Branches, Years, 1893–1897," (SA Box 79/5).

35 Outside the United States (typical household size was 5.1 persons in 1870, for example), Britain (4.4 in 1911), Switzerland (4.2 in 1920), and France (3.5 in 1901), however, our knowledge of typical household size beyond these few nations is severely constrained.

36 Bowden and Offer, "Household appliances."

37 Mahajan, Muller and Bass, "Product Diffusion Models"; Bowden and Offer, "Household appliances."

38 Income data are from Williamson "Global Labor Markets," for USA, GB, AUS (note, this does not include New Zealand, which is assumed here to have the same per capita real wage), I, SP, P, ITA, F, B, NL, D, SCA (DK, NOR, SWE combined through a population-weighted average into a Scandinavian per capita real wage). Russian data are based on Gregory's *Russian National Income* NNP per capita estimates spliced onto Goldsmith's "Tsarist Russia" output series for the early 1880s. See Godley, *Enterprise and Culture*, Table 4.4 for the splicing methodology. For South Africa (1913 only) and India the data are GDP per capita from Maddison "Explaining," Table 2.1. For Switzerland Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Europe*, reports NNP for 1913 only. This suggests that Swiss per capita income was very similar to French in 1913, and I have assumed this also to have been the case in 1907, when Swiss sewing machine consumption passed the 4% diffusion threshold.

39 See Godley, "Selling the Sewing Machine," and "Entrepreneurial opportunities" for a full analysis of Singer's international pricing and marketing strategies. Also see, "Retail Prices in England and Foreign Offices, 31/12/1884" (SA, Box 95/4); Charriere to London/ New York, 8 Jan. 1892 (SA, Box 83/5). US prices up to 1876 had been protected under the terms of the patent pool, see Davies, *Peacefully Working*, 58.

40 There is some partial evidence for a relaxation in credit terms in Russia immediately before 1914, however, the impact there and elsewhere on real present-value prices was muted. See Carstensen, *American Enterprise*, and Godley, "Selling the Sewing Machine."

41 Godley, "Selling the Sewing Machine."
42 Godley, "Selling the Sewing Machine'" Davies, *Peacefully Working*.
43 As the mean income increased across these countries from 61 to 70 to 79 and 83 for each of the successive diffusion thresholds (0.2 percent, 1 percent, 2 percent, and 4 percent of the population), the Standard Deviation fell from 10.1 to 8.1 to 7.6 to 7.2. This is a sizeable drop in variation in mean incomes with each successive threshold.
44 While the mean incomes associated with each successive diffusion threshold among these countries increased from 37 to 53, the standard deviation remained relatively low, rising only from 3.3 (at the 0.2 percent threshold) to 4.3 (at the 4 percent threshold). Note that this is a much small variation in income than compared with the first group of nations.
45 Arnold, "Global Goods," suggests both.
46 On Australasian distribution channels, see McKenzie to Woodruff, 16 April, 1879 (SA, Box 93/9).

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2 The Production Chain

Fashion, Technology, and Globalization (1800–2022)

Audrey Millet

Many technical improvements marked the textile industry in the eighteenth century, but it (still) could not meet the growing demand of the population. On the one hand, wars and slow transportation caused supply difficulties.[1] On the other hand, the weaving looms, that were not yet all mechanized, did not produce fast enough in 1850 to increase production volumes.[2] The cost of importing American cotton to Europe was too high. The smooth functioning of the production chain was based on industrialization, mechanization, chemical processes, and the concentration of the workforce, which was mostly servile or exploited. However, as transportation improved and colonization expanded, globalization became a key to the growing complexities in the production chain. Ready-to-wear gradually replaced custom manufacturing, until cheap t-shirts invaded consumers' closets from the 1980s. In two centuries, the production chain has become so globalized that we no longer know where our clothes come from. A cotton fiber from Texas may be sold to a Chinese manufacturer to be woven. Then it will be transformed into clothes in Bangladesh or Ethiopia. The printing can be done in France. Finally, the garment will be sold for $5 in a store on a California beach.[3] However, this travel is made possible thanks to deep technical transformations and a specific organization of work that find their origins at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[4] The democratization of clothing is dependent on the machines to gin the cotton ball, chemical dyes, and pesticides. The globalization of the industry has now become synonymous with abundance and waste, as evidenced by the 35,000 tons discovered in the Atacama Desert in Chile.[5]

During the eighteenth century, cotton was used increasingly, with European countries depended upon overseas production for their supply. Indeed, India dominated the production and trade of cotton in the Indian Ocean before the eighteenth century.[6] The development of international trade after 1500 contributed to the establishment of future European domination. This is why the study of technologies, products, and raw materials; sociocultural changes; and the integration of these transformations into the Western socioeconomic system mobilized so many political and economic actors.[7]

Looking at the fashion production chain requires studying Schumpeterian patterns of innovation. Joseph Schumpeter distinguishes five forms of innovation: product innovation, process innovation, production mode innovation, market innovation, and raw material innovation. For Schumpeter, the engine of the system is innovation and technical progress through the phenomenon of creative destruction. Growth is a permanent process of creation, destruction and restructuring of economic activities. In 1850, the market seemed promising, and it stimulated the entrepreneurs. To attract consumers, it was necessary to produce more, and at a lower cost.[8] The continual changing of fashions

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increased as a method to boost sales. Today, from the traditional eight seasons—spring, summer I, summer II, fall, fall–winter, winter I, winter II, and vacations[9]—the industry now produces yearly up to 52 seasons—in other words, new trends every week.[10] Nevertheless, such a race for performance has serious consequences. Agricultural workers, dyeing workers, and manufacturing plant workers are the ones most exploited. Their misery is the hidden cost of the limitless production that presents itself as avant-garde, creative, innovative, and even, in some cases, responsible.

The production chain is particularly complex because the fashion industry is composed of numerous segments. In most cases, it is both highly global and decentralized. The first step in the production chain is the production of the fibers. This is followed by yarn and fabric production and the garment manufacturing process. After that, the end product is sent to the retailer. Diversified production lines exist for similar garments depending on factors such as the type of material used and the final product required. Numerous production techniques can also be used for various types of fiber, yarn-spinning system, and fabric and garment technology. As a result of this complexity, it is difficult to map out the processes. Throughout its life cycle, a textile product requires numerous inputs. The land is used directly to produce the fibers and indirectly to build the production facilities, from storage to incineration. Processing the fibers requires fresh water supplies. Production and transportation have a cost in energy from renewable and non-renewable sources. Large amounts of pesticides, fertilizers, and chemicals are often used to protect the crops, and further chemicals are used to protect the final product in storage and transportation, as well as in packaging materials, especially as plastic and paper. Each of these stages requires a significant workforce. In the tradition of Fernand Braudel, historian Daniel Roche has linked the history of material culture and social behavior to the study of clothing.[11] Giorgio Riello has, in his book on the topic, given substance to a commodity, cotton, by grasping the interactions between desires, needs, and consumption and raw material and production processes, exchanges, and know-how, without forgetting the different actors—states, traders, craftsmen, and consumers.[12] Finally, the work of Liliane Hilaire-Pérez has modified a disciplinary field, the history of techniques, by rethinking the genealogy of industrial history with technicians, their know-how, and the plasticity of gestures at the center of production.[13] The study of techniques is quite recent.[14] They were first considered as the engine of industrialization and a symbol of the linear progress of civilization. Nevertheless, the great panoramas have finally given way to a history of technical knowledge, workers, and gestures, i.e., the know-how and the technical skills of the workers in the workshop.[15] From 1800 to 2020, the freedom of trade, exchange, and enterprise was in the ascendant. The recent triumphant neo-liberalization of the world has modified the different stages of the production chain. The consequences for workers and the environment, however, question the limits of production and corporate social responsibility.[16] The industrial problems, such as pollution, low wages, labor-induced diseases, and work accidents, are related both to structures and to a quasi-religious belief in a triumphant materiality and progress. The objective of this article is to trace the main transformations of the fashion industry production chain. It treats fashion as a total fact at the crossroads of economic and social history and the history of techniques.

In the first section, we will examine the characteristics of industrialization in the nineteenth century and major examples of technological innovations. Machines were introduced and transfers between sectors, such as the contribution of steel to the textile industry and to transportation that allows for the construction of machines and the establishment of rail and port infrastructures, produced their first concrete results. However, the burden placed upon the workforce was a heavy one. Until the 1960s, techniques were oriented toward synthetic fabrics, which corresponded to new lifestyles and to an indestructible belief in technical progress. The second section of this chapter examines what happened during the second half of the twentieth century, when the fashion industry became global, motivated by a new credo: neo-liberalism. Finally, the chapter then examines the point of no return reached in 2005, when the Multifiber Arrangement ended. These successive agreements, concluded between developing and developed countries, set export quotas by country and by product that varied over time according to the growth of developing countries. They protected the industries of developed countries from competition from low wages in developing countries.[17] The end of quotas has consequences on each step of the production chain. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, voices have been raised denouncing the excesses of production chains that pollute and often exploit a precarious and vulnerable workforce.[18] In a sort of continuity of the poor working conditions of the nineteenth century, the textile industry remains one of the most unequal in the world.

The Industrialization of the Chain of Production

The historians mentioned above argue that a main driver of industrialization and economic globalization is the fashion industry. The advent of the consumer society in the nineteenth century, the evolution of morals, lifestyles linked to urbanization and the belief in progress helped to transform the production chain. Initially, the price of clothing fell. This decline had already begun in the seventeenth century when manufacturers imposed mass production on workshops in order to dress the many English and French soldiers and sailors. Supply was stimulated by technological innovations.[19] To make mass production possible, it was first necessary to secure a supply of raw materials. The cotton gin, patented in 1794, enabled the southern regions of the United States to increase their output considerably.[20] The boom in cotton production in the United States is all the more astounding because at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution it did not seem to have a great future. However, from the 1830s to the 1840s its production increased 25-fold. Before the outbreak of the Civil War, the South produced about two-thirds of the world's cotton and, by 1860, over 70 percent of all US cotton produced was exported, mainly to England.[21] Friedrich Engels explains that "the history of the proletariat in England begins with the invention of the steam engine and the machines for working cotton." Engels sees the Industrial Revolution as having led to "a rapid fall in the price of all manufactured goods, the prosperity of trade and manufacture, the conquest of almost all unprotected foreign markets." But the new "national wealth" did not benefit everyone.[22] The rural exodus intensified demographic pressure on the industrial cities, which were unable to accommodate the new populations decently. The discussions of the industrialists on the English Factory Act of 1833 illustrate their fears. They thought that the regulations would put them at a disadvantage. The reduction in child labor that resulted from that Act led to an increase in the expenses of employers, who also subcontracted to workers whose activity was not regulated. The sanitary conditions in the workshops led to serious diseases, including tuberculosis, known as the "tailor's disease." The steam power used in the textile mills also lowered prices of clothing as it was made more quickly. New textile designs, which attracted customers with their shimmering colors, were facilitated by the loom of the Lyon-based weaver Joseph Marie

Jacquard, which made the complex series of operations needed to integrate a pattern into the weave simpler. Between 1801 and 1811 more than 10,000 looms were introduced, becoming widespread in the 1860s. In the nineteenth century, industrialists concentrated on the manufacture of substitute products by using mechanization,[23] and the new looms perfectly imitated the patterns of Indian cashmere shawls. The sewing machine had a direct impact on mechanization in factories, in the manufacture of garments in the home, and on the spread of subcontracted work.[24] Building on the developments of Barthélemy Thimonnier, Walter Hunt, Elias Howe, and Isaac Singer, Nathan Wheeler and Allen B. Wilson succeeded in marketing an efficient machine with interchangeable parts, operated by the worker's foot and hand. It allowed increased specialization and reduced the need for skilled labor. By the 1870s, steam sewing machines were making the entire wardrobe. In practice, the time needed to make a coat was reduced from six to three days.[25] To increase the efficiency of the production line, standard sizes were introduced. During the American Civil War, the sewing machine and the concept of the ready-made garment fulfilled the enormous demand for uniforms for the Union Army (1.5 million per year);[26] subsequently, manufacturers standardized civilian clothing based on army statistics, while drawing on anthropometric research and the development of international units of measurement. The speed of the machine and the standardized measurements made garments available and affordable.[27]

The automation of textile manufacturing made it possible to speed up the production of fabrics and sell more of them at lower prices. Mechanization seemed to be a real economic incentive. The second Industrial Revolution impacted numerous industrial sectors, and the fashion industry's production chain was inspired by some of them to transfer, adapt and/or adopt new techniques. The invention of the mackintosh, the zipper and the training shoe, for instance, are very revealing of these inter-sector technical exchanges. The clothing industrialist Charles Macintosh (1766–1843) was inspired by the chemical industry to make the first Mackintosh from cotton and Indian rubber. His waterproofing process, developed in 1824, was revolutionary.[28] The zipper was inspired by metallurgy. A Swedish electrical engineer, Gideon Sundback, after much experimentation, invented the modern metal zip and the machinery for its mass production in 1913. The Hookless Fastener Company then marketed the clever, practical, and reliable devices.[29] However, the product most representative of the alliance of innovative industries was the trainer. To manufacture this sports shoe, small pieces of material had to be assembled to fit the three-dimensional shape of the foot, which made the manufacturing process more complex. A sewing machine was needed to replace the experienced and skilled hands that folded, shaped, sewed the pieces together, and combined them with the sole. Jan Matzeliger solved the problem with a machine that attached the sole to the fabric in just one minute. Patented in 1883, it could produce hundreds of pairs a day.[30] The model thus produced became very popular for the flexibility and comfort offered by the vulcanized rubber used in its production,[31] and the rubber industry, including the British company Dunlop, immediately took over the manufacture and marketing of trainers. The production chain was thus transformed in part by innovations, but the race for performance came at a very high human cost.

Until the end of Civil War in 1865, slavery was the most significant policy in the southern states of the United States, as it protected cotton farmers from the dangers of a competitive market. Abolitionists had already won battles, however. Other laws hid this system of exploitation. In Great Britain, for example, the Vagrancy Act (1824) served to tie the tenant farmer to the land. Finally, in 1833, the British House of Commons passed an act for the gradual abolition of slavery in all British colonies. In the nineteenth century, growing cotton required almost unbearable physical labor. From mid-spring onwards the soil was prepared with hoes and, later, mule ploughs. After planting, the war on weed begins, as the fragile cotton is unable to withstand them. The workers therefore constantly protect the young plants. For four months, weeding was the planters' greatest concern and the most physically demanding work. The harvest season starts in late summer. On a large plantation, one worker could prepare, plant, weed, and harvest about nine hectares of cotton alone.[32] These labor requirements are impossible to meet if you are dependent on the market. Indeed, in order to develop consumption, it was necessary to lower prices. Early on, the human being—the slave—was the means to achieve this. However, if captive or precarious labor is part of the puzzle of capitalism, it is not the engine of capitalism alone. Equally important are the economic and political structures and the different actors—agents of commerce as well as consumers—men and women, activists and abolitionists.[33] Following the abolition of slavery in 1865, with the vote of the Thirteenth Amendment, other systems that imposed violence and coercion on large numbers of workers were instituted. The abolition of slavery had to be compensated for by tying workers to the land.[34] In exchange for their labor, the landowner provided them with accommodation and food, as well as the right to hunt and fish. By paying in kind rather than with money, the landowner ensured that labor was available at critical times. The crop privilege laws then closed the access of the tenant farm to the capital market, while expanding that of the landowners.[35] At the same time, planters opposed public schooling for poor blacks and whites, so that illiteracy and lack of education kept the balance of power heavily in favor of the planter and limited the workers' alternatives. But while these arrangements continued in most of the southern states, a new type of cotton milldeveloped in the Southwest.[36] These mills were highly mechanized and their owners imposed the division of labor. As a result, by the early 1900s, Texas was the largest cotton state in the country and a model of efficiency and productivity. Its success depended on the ability to avoid the labor market and bypass the competition. The use of European and Mexican migrants allowed business owners to pay them less in comparison to market wages. In Texas, productivity was the result not only of technical innovations but also of human dependency, which extended beyond the cotton fields to the cottage industries and sweatshops as workers' daily lives, their homes, and their children's schools, were also tied to the willingness of their employers to ease the conditions of labor of their employers.

In Britain, the clothing industry also has its own specificities.[37] The networks of tailors and seamstresses were gradually transformed into garment factories, but home work and subcontracting did not immediately disappear. In 1843, Thomas Hood's "The Song of the Shirt" in *Punch* drew attention to the situation of the workers. The poem depicts the miserable life of Mrs. Biddell, a widow and seamstress. In her home, she sewed clothes—trousers and shirts—from fabrics supplied by her boss but for which she had to pay a £2 deposit. To feed her children, she accumulates debt by pawning the clothes she makes. The story is very revealing of the misery of homeworkers in England.[38] The introduction of the sewing machine also encouraged piecework production.[39] The concentration and division of labor also served the efficiency of the production chain. In the mid-1890s, there were 80,000 seamstresses in Paris, a city of 2.7 million inhabitants.[40] In New York, more than 18,000 workers were employed in the manufacture of blouses in 1900. In the United States, the working conditions were similar to those of English women.[41] The rapid shift from made-to-measure to ready-to-wear during industrialization was stimulated by a sharp increase in foreign labor in the manufacturing centers. Small scattered workshops and large factories welcomed European migrants of Italian, Polish, or of Jewish descent; men, women, and children seeking work.[42] Sweatshops are often seen as a particularly demeaning way of organizing work, morally and politically distinct from other legal forms of low-paid work that seem acceptable in comparison.[43] These types of workshop, which already existed in other sectors, were the basis for the manufacture of consumer goods, such as clothing or jewelry. They are defined not necessarily by the size of the workshops, which can be variable, but by the type of work involved, such as sewing, polishing stones for jewelry, or dyeing leather. When an employee produces more value for the company than the company pays him, he is exploited.[44] Exploitation refers to an unjust social relationship based on an asymmetry of power or an unequal exchange of value between workers, considered to be inferior, and their employers, considered to be superior.[45] The development of the textile industry was based on aggressive pricing strategies from the nineteenth century, which helped to reduce expenses. This pressure on the costs of production worsened the conditions of production. Working conditions deteriorated as manufacturers took advantage of the increase in the number of immigrants, which influenced both the rise of sweatshops and the movement to unionize workers.[46] To illustrate the rising misery that accompanied sweatshops, the 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory is particularly damning. Locked up on the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors to prevent theft or absences from work, 146 workers, mainly Italian and Jewish, died of burns, poisoning, or as a result of falling from windows.[47] The inescapable logic of the low-cost market dictated that costs should be reduced as much as possible, and industrialists cut back on safety and working conditions in order to "balance" the books.

Mechanization made it possible to produce fabrics at a lower cost, allowing a wider customer base. Connections of the textile industry with other sectors, such as the chemical industry, have allowed technical transfers to meet consumer demands, such as comfort and well-being. Nevertheless, production and manufacturing still relied on human labor, which was under increasing pressure. The exploitation of labor allowed industrialists to keep up with increased competition in a globalized economy seeking to drive down prices, regardless of the human cost. This dynamic continued throughout the first part of the twentieth century.

From the Laboratory to the Globe

In the 1930s, the impact of economic crisis and changes in morals altered the industry's approach to clothing. Beaded dresses were a distant memory. Comfort became a watchword of the twentieth century, while mass consumption became the norm. Manufacturers therefore had to offer new products on a regular basis to satisfy growing demand. They turned to the chemical sector, which profoundly modified the production chain. For a long time, cotton, linen, wool, and silk were the only materials available. New fibers had to fulfill a set of specifications: low cost, strength, flexibility, and ease of care.

Among the first synthetic fibers, nylon is a good example of the use of petrochemicals in clothing. From parachutes to women's stockings, it seemed to be the answer to every need. The formula was created in 1931 by the American chemist Wallace Carothers of the DuPont company, who named it "66." Paul Schlack, a German chemist at IG Farben, developed another type of fiber, "nylon 6," in 1938. Nylon heralded a new revolution in the textile industry. DuPont started commercial production in 1939, focusing mainly on stockings, which were officially presented at the San Francisco exhibition. Customers were immediately convinced, as the tights combined durability, beauty, and relatively lower cost than silks. The American company was able to meet the needs of its time thanks to the prevailing technical, scientific culture. The "miracle fiber"[48] dominated until the 1980s, when it was finally replaced by polyester. The science laboratory thus became an essential step in the production and creation of clothing. With more women working outside the home, the spread of public transport, and increased ease of travel, fabric care became an obsession of twentieth-century consumers and manufacturers. The mixture of natural fibers, wool or cotton, with polyester increased resistance to creasing and staining and made washing easier. The development of synthetic fibers even influenced the US Congress in passing a law on textile labeling to indicate to consumers the percentage of natural and synthetic fibers, as they could no longer identify them with the naked eye.[49] In the second half of the twentieth century, manufacturers continued to invest in advanced techniques to reduce the price of the finished product.

So-called high-tech fabrics are the result of scientific and technical advances. The most recent textiles are borrowed from the fields of chemistry, computer science, aerospace engineering, and the automotive industry. Most synthetic products mimic natural fibers but with the advantages of being stronger, lighter, more transparent, or more elastic. While techno-materials have emerged without replacing traditional manufacturing methods, such as weaving and knitting, experimentation with various finishing techniques for non-woven fabrics has introduced a new aesthetic option. This is the case with Tyvek, a non-woven fabric composed of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) fibers with a thickness between 0.5 and 10 μm, developed by DuPont de Nemours. After extrusion, the fibers are randomly and non-directionally arranged and then consolidated under pressure by a thermal process. Tyveck was marketed in 1967 as nontoxic and recyclable sheets or rolls of various sizes in the United States, Luxembourg, and Malaysia.[50] Laboratories such as Media, Starlab, Charmed Technology, and International Fashion Machines at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are now entirely dedicated to this type of research. The aim of these groups is to develop prototypes of marketable, user-friendly, and wearable electronic products and explore synergies between computing, textiles, health, and defense.[51] The modern textile industry is both driven and transformed by social and economic changes, but in some respects it has gained a bad reputation in the process, being accused of exploiting workers, polluting the environment and poisoning workers and consumers because of the toxic, carcinogenic and mutagenic products contained in the clothes.[52] The technical transformations that have profoundly changed the nature of clothing have also been accompanied by a change in the geographies of production, as the consumer West outsources part of the production chain to Asia.

For consumers in the West, globalization is visible via the abundance of fashions sold by multinational retailers, who can update their stocks, enter into transnational trade agreements, and co-ordinate the worldwide distribution of goods at the click of a mouse. We consume images and logos that reflect an affluent Western civilization, rather than a garment made in developing countries.[53] The geography of manufacturing is undergoing a radical shift, with consequences for the production chain.

Companies no longer manufacture their own goods, but source them from low-wage countries with weak or non-existent environmental legislation. Internal competition in underdeveloped countries allows companies to cut costs and take advantage of exemptions infree ports.[54] Local manufacturers subcontract much of the sewing, and even cutting, to sweatshops in countries such as Mexico, China, Thailand, Romania, and Vietnam in order to increase their profits. Behind the image and reputation of the big companies there are underground economies that exploit tens of thousands of workers. However, the shift of worker exploitation to underdeveloped countries is not complete. Los Angeles and New York (USA), Leicester and London (UK) and Prato (Italy) are well known for their vast underground economies made up of immigrant communities.[55] The glamour of the fashion industry thus finds its reverse side in the shadows of the production line, where slavery, child labor, exploitation, and physical, sexual, and moral harassment are rife.[56] The jobs are not accompanied by even the most basic guarantees and benefits for the workers. This situation has worsened since the end of the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) in 2005.

Since the 1970s, the MFA limited trade in clothing and textiles at a time when most trade was becoming increasingly liberalized. It set quotas on exports of clothing and textiles from "developing" to "developed" countries, so that the former would not compete with the latter through low wages. As the MFA covered the volume rather than the value of imports, some countries circumvented it by diversifying and improving the quality of their exports.[57] South Korea, for example, began outsourcing to countries that were not subject to the quotas. But for a country like Bangladesh, which is too poor to diversify its economy and whose workforce remains mainly low-skilled, the MFA had devastating effects. It is estimated to have cost the country millions of jobs and billions of dollars in exports. When the MFA ended, developing countries were 30 years behind their Western competitors, and it was difficult for them to adapt to the dramatic change in the geography of fashion and to participate in the global game. With the lifting of the quotas, however, Southeast Asia became the hotbed of the garment industry. In 2005, the island of Saipan, the largest of the Northern Mariana Islands (Pacific Ocean), a US commonwealth, had 34 garment factories employing mostly Asian workers. In 2013, the factories were all abandoned: the machines were moved to Asia, to countries with cheaper labor. Only the clothing labels that run through the dilapidated buildings still bear witness to this vanished industry. The young women workers in Saipan who could not afford to return home have turned to work in the sex trade.[58] Discussions on the consequences of the MFA agreements are still ongoing. MEP Saskia Bricmont is currently investigating the possibility of selecting the products imported into Europe, including a ban on dangerous and particularly toxic products. Products resulting from slavery are already prohibited in some countries. However, proposals to regulate free trade are strongly opposed.[59]

After the end of the MFA, textiles and clothing fell under the jurisdiction of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The predictable trade war between China and the EU resulted in millions of products being seized and held in EU harbor warehouses in the summer of 2005. New tariffs were then negotiated and imposed on China. But the economic crisis of 2008 had a serious impact on garment production. Imports to the United States fell by 15.7 percent in 2009 and all the world's major clothing suppliers reported a decline. A third of China's 30 million textile and garment workers, 1 million Indian workers, and 20 percent of the Cambodian garment workforce lost their jobs.[60] According to World Bank economists, who point to improved working conditions and higher wages, China is nevertheless "the big winner" in the global garment export race over the last 15 years.[61] The country has diversified by producing higher-value-added items. It provides a guarantee of quality and benefits from a growing domestic market, a very industry-friendly government, established supply chains and a truly huge labor pool. This trade liberalization has changed production processes, some of which have become, at various levels, markers of integration with capitalism.[62]

Nevertheless, the second half of the twentieth century has revealed the perils of fashion industry production methods. The technology releases numerous chemicals into the environment and into human bodies, and the ever-changing trends are a marketing device that show a homogenization of design around the world and environmental and human costs seem to be the indicators of a production mode that has run out of steam. Every step of the chain needs to be revised.[63]

New Challenges: Freedom and Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability

The excessive influence of technology in the clothing industry is regularly criticized for facilitating high-replicability, homogenizing appearances, and using too many chemicals. In the Japanese clothing industry, for example, some producers try to keep a balance between new technologies and traditional crafts such as pleating, shibori, and resistance dyeing. The strength of the Japanese textile industry lies precisely in the combination of new technologies with traditional crafts such as pleating, shibori, and resist dyeing.[64] Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, and Yohji Yamamoto were the leaders of this trend, which brought together the creative textile industry and the fashion sector. They called for a more balanced perspective between tradition and modernity. But, above all, they blamed an economic and social system based on the race for technical innovations.

The production chain must respect fundamental human rights. This issue is also a geopolitical one. Companies are aware that rights are less respected in some, particularly underdeveloped, countries, and yet choose to locate production in those countries. A map of clothing manufacturing locations would include dictatorships such as Myanmar and China. A Chinese minority, the Uyghurs, who are Muslims, are victims of a policy of confinement, harassment, and oppression by the Chinese government. Numbering more than 12 million, the Uyghurs are particularly present in the autonomous province of Xinjiang (northwest China). On 19 September 2004, the "Government-in-Exile of East Turkestan [another name for Xinjiang]" was founded in Washington, D.C., with a parliamentary system of government and Anwar Yusuf Turani as prime minister. A constitution has been proclaimed and translated into Turkish, English, Chinese, and Japanese. The Chinese Communist Party is therefore suspicious of this minority and its activism and protests, and has placed the Uyghurs under permanent surveillance. The province is cordoned off and surrounded by checkpoints and watchtowers, and people are searched in shops, buses, and schools.[65] Around 1,200 camps internment camps and 1 million prisoners are currently open in Xinjiang province, explained by the Chinese government as re-education camps where patriotism is instilled into the occupants.[66] However, it is alleged that occupants are also tortured, sterilized, raped, and drugged.[67] Picked up during raids, without clear reason or trial, Uyghurs are interned and families remain without news of them. In particular, *Le Figaro* quotes the recent reports of German researcher Adrian Zenz, based on Chinese administrative documents and interviews with local women. "In the two major prefectures of the region where the Uyghurs are in the majority, the number of births has thus drastically dropped since 2016."[68] There is a great deal of reportage on the subject, which will be the topic of a separate publication. It can be noted, however, that the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (INA) archives feature documents on the sterilization of Uighur people that date back to 1999.[69]

What does this have to do with the garment industry? China uses Uyghurs as cheap labor to work in the cotton fields and textile factories. The opportunity is too good: a workforce that cannot fight back. On March 1, 2020, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute published a detailed report denouncing the forced labor of tens of thousands of Uyghurs in the service of major international brands such as Zara, Uniqlo, Nike, Adidas, and Gap. Between 2017 and 2019, more than 80,000 detainees in the Xinjiang region were transferred to factories "belonging to the supply chains of world-renowned technology, textile and automotive brands."[70] Eighty-three brands were involved,[71] most of which denied any knowledge of the subcontractors concerned when questioned and consider that they are not responsible for subcontracting. However, they had already promised to examine their production chain more closely and to improve on transparency after the Rana Plaza disaster. On April 24, 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza, a building located in Dhaka, Bangladesh, caused at least 1,130 deaths for about 2,500 survivors among the seamstresses who worked there for major Western brands.

The textile and clothing industry's lack of interest in environmental and social issues is regularly reported in the media. Concern for sustainability is growing in the textile and clothing sector, as suggested by the 1987 Brundtland Report: "Sustainable development is the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[72] Consequently, definitions differ according to the contexts, geography, and industry sectors involved. However, one can be certain that the preferred approach is holistic. There are three pillars to consider: environment, society, and economy. "Sustainability" is now integrated into the business operations of companies. It is a way of buying a green conscience in the face of increasing criticism.[73] Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been defined as "the responsibility of companies for their impact on society." The origins of CSR date back to the nineteenth century, when employers were called upon by the press and the public to improve the living conditions of workers. Since then, CSR has become a marketing and reputation tool.[74]

In the age of industrialization, it is impossible to manufacture a product without environmental constraints.[75] However, these can be kept to a minimum. A sustainable textile product is one that is manufactured taking into account the three pillars throughout its life cycle. From birth to grave, products have an impact on the environment, society, and the economy. Each product starts its life cycle with the extraction of raw materials and goes through manufacturing, distribution, and use, before the cycle ends at the stage of disposal through incineration or landfill.[76]

Environmental sustainability is about reducing the consumption of all resources, such as raw materials, energy, and water. It also includes the use of renewable resources. However, pesticides, dyestuffs, and a lack of worker protection are implicated in the poisoning of workers, possibly leading to drastically compromised health: infertility problems, cancers, and autism are on the rise in producing countries.[77] In fact, rather than shifting from the West to the East, we can see health disasters spreading throughout the world; industrialized countries are not left behind in this respect. From the retailer who became sterile after coming into contact with chromium contamination in clothing to the workers poisoned by phosphine in port warehouses to the consumer burned after being contaminated by DFMU, an anti-mold chemical placed in shoeboxes in the form of a small white sachet, the list of victims of the textile industry continues to grow.[78] The main concerns when it comes to environmental sustainability are raw materials, energy consumption, water consumption, wastewater discharge or water pollution, soil or land pollution, air emissions, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or carbon footprint, hazardous waste management and toxic and hazardous chemical management,[79] and these should be considered at every stage throughout the life cycle of a product.

Finally, the human cost of most textile and clothing industries in the world is largely underestimated or hidden. Social sustainability therefore also needs to be a priority. First, technical progress and mechanization have not always served to improve the lives of workers. Although recent voices have called for a "reshoring," for example in the case of sports shoes or in the Chinese clothing industry, where large companies produce for Western customers,[80] clothing companies have in general relocated production facilities to the poorest countries, where workers receive less than a living wage and are at constant risk of industrial disasters.[81] Southeast Asia and, more recently, sub-Saharan Africa have become notorious as places where modern slavery continues, fuelling the garment economy and consumer desire. In 2018, the monthly wage for textile workers was 23 euros in Ethiopia and 85 euros in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Turkey, China, and Thailand, places with higher monthly wages—respectively, 304, 291, and 276 euros—have become less attractive to investors.[82] Although the production chain has been based on the lowering of the cost of clothing for two centuries, the decline is not linear. The New Deal (1933–1939), a policy US President Franklin Roosevelt implemented to combat the effects of the Great Depression in the United States, notably through state aid programs, and the major social reforms of the Front Populaire-led government (1936–1938) in France show notable wage gains and a strong welfare state—even if the gains are incomplete. Social sustainability is therefore a very broad field. People's well-being and basic needs are at the center of the issue, and may be manifested though labor practices, gender bias, harassment, equal opportunities, education, child labor, health and safety, protection, human rights, and welfare. Positive sustainability practices are being implemented at company level in all industry sectors and most companies now have a corporate social responsibility division.

The primary purpose of companies is to make a profit. However, economic sustainability cannot be reduced to profit alone. It is linked to environmental and social sustainability. The manufacture of products must be seen in the long term, questioning cost savings, productivity, cost of living, development, and smart growth.[83] The economy should not be based on profit at all costs. For a long time, researchers have been working on alternative models. The Doughnut model, developed by the economist Kate Raworth for the NGO Oxfam, integrates two essential concepts: that of planetary limits crossed with that of social borders.[84] For David Harvey, the essence of capitalism is its amorality and lawlessness, and to speak of a regulated ethical capitalism is to commit a fundamental error.[85]

Conclusion

The development of the textile industry since the nineteenth century has made it possible to offer clothes that are more comfortable, suitable for different types of activity, and less expensive for the consumer. Technology has changed the way we design fabrics and now manufacturers must anticipate consumer desires. The well-rehearsed discourse of corporate communication units and the difficulties of traceability in the manufacturing chain hide the dangers incurred by workers and consumers, however. The supply chain has become globalized, giving the impression that the tide is turning from industrialized to less developed countries. This image is false. Chemical advances, technical innovations, and mechanization regularly clash with social welfare. Behind innovations, progress, and industrial organizations, it is the performance of corporate conglomerates that drives the location of work and the choice of components; in short, the ever-increasing consumption of fabrics has just created the illusion of the democratization of this sector. The search for the lowest price, which has motivated technical research since the nineteenth century, has been to the detriment of the worker and, ultimately, the consumer. Finally, by relying on countries that are least developed, both industrially and in terms of social protection, companies circumvent human rights by introducing modern slavery in plain sight in order to feed hyper-consumption.[86] The fashion supply chain is a risk to health and a social hazard at every stage. It is estimated that only 1 percent of the world's clothing is produced responsibly.[87] While Mexican sweatshops and poisoned workers in Southeast Asian dye houses may seem far away, they are in fact the foundations of a fashion system that exploits all workers and consumers around the globe. The belief in a continuous and linear progress should be questioned. Indeed, the capitalist system of predation of resources, human and environmental, now shows its limits. However, the concept of degrowth is often poorly perceived, as the current economic model has been based on the production and consumption of objects for more than 150 years. The triumph of numbers symbolizes the triumph of growth. Among new industrial innovations to be considered, the decrease of production and the tempering of consumption now seem to be the most important.

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3 Visibly Invisible

The Enigmatic History of Technology in the Fashion-Industrial Complex

Regina Lee Blaszczyk

Fashion studies and fashion history have long focused on the cultural meaning of dress and the aesthetic appreciation of textiles and costume without due consideration of the supply chain within the fashion system. This chapter, in contrast, examines the important, but little-studied, role of technology and technical data flows in the global fashion system. It advocates for a broad view of fashion production that stretches across the supply chain from fiber manufacturing to clothing distribution. Elsewhere, I have articulated the need to reposition the historical analysis of fibers, fabrics, and fashions within the economic framework I call the "fashion-industrial complex." To understand fashion as a business, we need to grapple more fully with production and distribution, developing a deeper appreciation for industrial districts and manufacturing centers, where layers of intermediaries labored to link commerce and culture. From Paris to New York, the fashion economy was built around a complex network of firms and industries engaged in business-to-business or B2B transactions. With the help of "fashion intermediaries" working behind the scenes, the network generated new styles for a segmented market comprised of everyone from the couture-dressed princess to the rayon-clad clerk typist.[1]

This chapter elaborates on the concept of the fashion-industrial complex and the importance of fashion intermediaries by highlighting the visibly invisible role of the chemical and textile industries in the creation of style goods (Figure 3.1). The main historical actors in this chapter are the manufacturers and marketers who produced, sold, and promoted dyestuffs, color forecasts, man-made textiles, and synthetic fibers. The case studies in the four sections of this chapter explore the symbiotic relationships among chemical companies, converters, textile mills, fashion creators, and apparel makers during the long Second Industrial Revolution. Significantly, this period, dating from around 1850 to 1970, witnessed the triumph of ready-to-wear and mass-market fashion.

The discussion starts with a look at the color revolution that transformed the visual culture of fashion in Victorian and Modern times. Major innovations in dyestuffs led to the development of new forms of information sharing within the fashion-industrial complex. The first section, The Colorful World of William Henry Perkin, examines the role of a new scientific discipline, synthetic organic chemistry, in introducing high-performance dyes to the textile industry between 1856 and 1914. The principal actors in this sea change were the scientists in the new chemical field, the entrepreneurs who commercialized the synthetic materials, and the textile mills of Europe and America who used them to transform the look and feel of fabrics.

The next section, The Carte de Nuance as a Design Tool, explores how the dye explosion wreaked havoc with the design process and how the chaos led to the development of modern information-sharing practices. The proliferation of colorants forced the

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Figure 3.1 The important role of chemical technologies in fashion production is often overlooked by academic researchers. This vignette from the larger exhibition of Imperial Chemical Industries at the British Industries Fair in London, 1929, shows stylish calicos, artificial silk, and cottons that were made using ICI products. Courtesy, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE, USA.

dye houses in French textile centers like Lyon and the style bureaus of Paris to devise novel ways for managing the palette and disseminating news on the latest shades. This challenge led to the widespread adoption of the shade card and the swatch book as tools for marketing the latest color trends. The fold-out shade card—illustrated with ribbons, thread samples, or fabric swatches—was adopted to promote new colors to all fashion producers, from fabric mills to knitwear factories, couture houses, and ready-to-wear designers. The key mediators were the color watchers who interpreted trendy Parisian hues for broad dissemination. While the business of trend watching originated in France, it was the sprawling American fashion-industrial complex that perfected the shade card as a color forecasting tool in the years between World War I and World War II.

The second half of the chapter shifts from color forecasts to textile materials by examining the impact of man-made and synthetic fibers on the fashion trades. In the long twentieth century, the textile development of the greatest consequence was the introduction of artificial fibers to rival Mother Nature's bounty of cotton, silk, wool, and flax. The upheaval occurred in two stages. First, the man-made materials known as artificial silk, or rayon, gained a toehold; this occured during the early twentieth century. In the second stage, test-tube fibers such as nylon, acrylic, polyester, and spandex entered the fashion scene in the postwar era.

The third section, The Rayon Age, considers the rise of man-made fibers from the late Victorian era to World War II. The discussion focuses on the influence of rayon makers on the fashion business, with reference to how rayon companies promoted man-made materials to textile mills, clothing creators, and consumers. The fourth section, Test-Tube Fibers and the Midcentury Textile Revolution, takes the discussion into the post–World War II era, when American companies like E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company and British firms such as the Calico Printers' Association and Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) developed the first synthetic fibers and promoted these miracle materials within the Western fashion economy. Whether they made rayon or polyester, the fiber makers, working through fashion intermediaries, kept tabs on Parisian taste-makers, and those important relationships are explored.

The concept of the fashion-industrial complex acknowledges that style creation is an economic activity that involves the entire supply chain, starting with fiber makers and moving forward to clothing retailers. There are many economic activities involved in the making of style goods. The handful of technical innovations considered here—dyes, shade cards, rayon yarns, and synthetic fibers—facilitated the rise of mass-market fashion by creating the ability for manufacturers and retailers to introduce novel designs at an affordable price. The combination of low prices, convenience of use, eye-catching colors, and softness of touch made possible by technics helped ready-to-wear to succeed in the mass market. Synthetic materials and color management systems were invisible to consumers, but those technologies enabled the stenographer, factory worker, or housewife to buy a colorful frock in a washable rayon crepe that didn't wrinkle, shrink, or fade. This analysis, ultimately, pulls back the curtain on the hidden history of technology and the role of fashion intermediaries in the democratization of fashion.

The Colorful World of William Henry Perkin

In the Victorian era, William Henry Perkin (1838–1907) was celebrated in popular culture as an icon of British inventiveness. The Second Industrial Revolution was just taking off in 1856 when Perkin, a teenaged student at the Royal College of Chemistry on Oxford Street in central London (later merged with Imperial College London), tackled an assignment that would transform his life—and launch a new industry. His professor was August Wilhelm von Hoffmann (1818–1892), a pioneer in the emerging discipline of synthetic organic chemistry. Keen to find an anti-malarial drug for the British tropics, Hoffmann asked Perkin to work on synthetizing quinine from coal-tar, a waste-product from the manufacture of gas for lighting. Over Easter break, Perkin squirrelled away at his parents' home on Cable Street in the East End, a working-class section of London. While mixing chemicals in his makeshift laboratory, Perkin knocked over a beaker, spilled some liquid, and watched a rag turn deep purple. He rushed to the drapery shops in Piccadilly and bought a skein of plain white silk. He re-created the experiment—and successfully dyed the silk a beautiful shade of mauve.[2]

Perkin was on to something. For centuries, purple robes had been reserved for kings, due to the arduous task of extracting the dark, rich color from a type of Mediterranean mollusk. By the 1840s, French dye houses in Lyon and Mulhouse experimented with coal-tar and other materials to produce stunning hues for silk and cotton. Although they gained some favor, these expensive colors were fugitive on the fabric. By serendipity, Perkin had stumbled across a new way to make a *colorfast* purple dye. The young chemist left school and, with some of his relatives, opened the world's first factory for aniline dyes. Perkin had his satisfaction when two royals gave their imprimatur the new *couleur mauve*. In the summer of 1857, Empress Eugénie (1826–1920), the wife of Napoleon III, wore a lilac-hued silk dress and bonnet that were reported to match the mauve color of her eyes. A few months later in the spring of 1858, Queen Victoria (1819–1901) wore a mauve velvet gown to the wedding of her daughter Victoria, the Princess Royal, to Prince Frederick of Prussia. Both aristocratic fashion choices were likely created with French colorants, rather than with the Perkin dyes that were still under commercial development. But mauve was soon *the* fashion color on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and the future of Perkin's aniline business was secure.

Competition emerged. In 1862, the Perkin factory exhibited mauve materials at the International Exhibition in South Kensington, London—as did other British firms. But the real threat came from Central Europe. Within a few short years, the chemical industry of Germany wrested the synthetic dye industry away from the first movers in France and Britain. After the Franco-Prussian War and German unification, chemical companies such as Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik (BASF) captured the market for colorants. The German chemical industry, clustered in the Rhine Valley, became one of the high-tech sectors of the Second Industrial Revolution. Its success can be attributed to major changes in the national political economy and the global textile sector. Several internal factors in Germany fostered growth: first, favorable trading conditions among the states before and after unification; second, patent laws that encouraged innovation; third, the expansion of universities and polytechnical institutes to train scientists and engineers; and fourth, major investments in science-based industrial research. Throughout the world, the textile industry was always on the lookout for new ways to enhance appeal of their fabrics, thereby creating a global market for German dyes.

The European and American nations of the Second Industrial Revolution had sophisticated textile industries and were advancing ready-to-wear production. In the United States, the Civil War (1861–1865) spurred the demand for warm, durable soldiers' uniforms in standard sizes. Firms like Wanamaker and Brown, Philadelphia menswear clothiers with a store called Oak Hall, supplied clothing to the Union army. Some clothiers of this period adopted menswear tailoring techniques to make women's and children's apparel, including ladies' mantles or cloaks. But most women's clothing still had to be custom made. The trendy hour-glass silhouette was achieved by wearing figure-shaping layers: a laced corset and a tight bodice above the waist, and a crinoline or bustle, petticoats, and a long billowy skirt below. A consumer could buy a factory-made corset, but a professional dressmaker had to fit the complicated outer costume to her figure. As consumer society blossomed, the shopping areas of good-sized cities and towns were filled first with dry-goods shops, or haberdasheries, that stocked yard goods and sewing necessities. These retailers were later joined by the new department stores that carried fabrics, millinery, and ready-to-wear. Concurrently, the appetite for stylish Paris-inspired ladies' attire was stimulated by the fashion press. Magazines like *Godey's Lady's Book* (1830–1898) in the United States and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1852–1879) in the United Kingdom featured hand-colored fashion plates showing the latest designs—influenced by the silhouettes of Paris and the colors of the Rhine Valley. The fashion-industrial complex ran on an intricate system of interlocking gears, all moving in sync to generate the new style trends for popular consumption.

The chemical industry's dyes were one of the building blocks of the fashion-industrial complex. Aniline colors had launched the Victorian chromatic explosion, but the Germans soon discovered more and better synthetic dyes, starting with the alizarin group in 1868 and continuing with other inventions.[3] Constant innovation led to Germany's global dominance of the color market by the outbreak of World War I, when the chemical industry of the Rhine Valley produced about 90 percent of the world's dyestuffs.[4] Even indigo, the plant-based dye that gave denim its distinctive blue, was displaced by a synthetic alternative discovered in 1883 and commercialized by BASF at the turn of the century.[5] It is important, however, to acknowledge that synthetics did not entirely eliminate natural dyes. Materials such as logwood, used by the wool textile industry to create black fabrics, found continued application during the era of high-tech dyes.

German prowess in research, engineering, and manufacturing was superseded only by efficient distribution. To expand sales globally, firms like BASF set up central marketing departments in the home country and branch sales offices around the world. Besides adopting new information technologies like the typewriter and the cablegram, the Rhineland dye makers developed a sophisticated communications system for keeping their agents and customers abreast of the latest technical, economic, and aesthetic developments. Today, archives such as the Science History Institute in Philadelphia have extensive collections of fold-out cardboard books, or shade cards, that were created by chemical companies to promote their colorants. With every seasonal fashion shift, the dye manufacturers offered new hues to the dye houses, finishers, and fabric mills in textile districts around the world. The shade cards were lined with ribbons, yarns, or swatches that were dyed in the trendy shades for the upcoming season. Shade cards were intended to sell Rhineland colorants, but textile mills began to use them creatively. As will be discussed in the next section, textile stylists came to think of them as forecasts of seasonal color trends.

The retired William Henry Perkin watched the rise of the German dye industry with interest. His two sons, William Henry Perkin, Jr. (1860–1929) and Arthur George Perkin (1861–1937), shared his penchant for chemistry but developed careers that were, in a backhanded way, a salute to Germany. Both sons held academic appointments at universities tied to the textile industry. William Jr. earned a German doctorate and then worked at universities in Edinburgh, Manchester, and Oxford. Arthur, more of a practical bench chemist, spent much of his career at the University of Leeds, which began as the Yorkshire College of Science, a textile school. The transatlantic scientific community feted the elder Perkin as a Victorian technological pioneer. In 1866, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in London and later received the organization's two high honors: the Royal Medal in 1879 and the Davy Medal in 1889. He was knighted in 1906. That year, the aged inventor steamed across the Atlantic Ocean to New York, where the local section of the Society of Chemical Industry, a scientific body, honored him with its inaugural Perkin Medal to mark the jubilee of his discovery of mauveine in an East End rowhouse. Perkin, the one-time mauve wunderkind, died the next year.[6]

The Carte de Nuance as a Design Tool

Let's pretend it's 1910. Picture yourself working as a fabric designer in Lowell, Massachusetts, a major textile city in the New England cotton manufacturing district. As a youngster in the 1880s, you studied textiles at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), then in Boston's Back Bay, under "a practical designer of long experience."[7] MIT engendered you with a reverence for new techniques—and for old design traditions. You learned to be a copyist, an expert in the "art of utilizing the work of other men with a view to getting the best results."[8] Class field trips to local museums exposed you to "the artistic creations of designers of past generations," and you appreciated "ancient specimens of fabrics, glassware, wall paper, pottery and floor coverings rich in colors and figures."[9] You knew of the legendary William Henry Perkin, and in your design job at Lowell, you planned fabrics that would be colored with synthetic dyes. Your workspace was a large room of the mill, illuminated by natural light pouring through tall windows. Most of the day, you sat at a drawing board, creating watercolor renderings of patterns to be printed on woven cotton cloth. Those calico patterns were based on motifs and colorways from the past. The design department had a reference library filled with books of classical motifs, stacks of ladies' fashion magazines, and swatch books containing fabrics made by the mill and its competitors. But one of the most valuable tools to you as a copyist was the collection of color cards or shade cards.

The color card is not unique to the fashion-industrial complex.[10] It belongs to a long tradition of sales aids in the style industries. For centuries, businesses in the creative industries had made samples that showed the range of design options for texture, quality, decoration, and hue. European porcelain makers created sample plates that showcased the enamel colors they could paint on chinaware at the customer's request.[11] As the demand for stylish textiles grew, the fashion-industrial complex excelled at the production of sample cards. There were sample cards for almost every component of a fashion outfit, from metal snaps to straw braid. The most important type of sample card was the shade card or carte de nuance.

As discussed, the German chemical manufacturers created sophisticated shade cards to promote new hues, but their customers, the dyers that colorized yarns and fabrics for the converters, weaving mills, and knitting mills, began to produce their own color cards to market their dyeing services locally. Shade cards eventually took on a life of their own to become an essential design tool in textiles and fashion. The Musée des Tissus et des Arts décoratifs in Lyon has shade cards from local dyehouses whose major customers included the nearby broadsilk and ribbon mills. One of the earliest cartes de nuance in their holdings, donated by the dye firm of Marnas, Bonnet & Fils, shows the silk shades for autumn 1882.[12] The artifact is an accordion envelope holding 12 of the 18 or more original removable floss cards, each having loops of dyed yarns lined up in a row to show harmonious shade combinations. By studying a set of shade cards like this, the textile stylist could hone their understanding of how colors might work together to create a fabric that was right for the moment. Over time, the shade cards of the dye industry became more sophisticated. The Textilmuseum in St. Gallen, Switzerland, another important silk manufacturing center, has a BASF sample book from Ludwigshafen am Rhein, which is filled with large cotton fabric swatches of printed designs created from the firm's alizarin dyes.[13] These color cards and sample books promoted the new dyes, and along the way, suggested trendy color combinations and edgy fabric designs.

The creators of the cartes de nuance took their cues from the fashion trades of Paris, from the silk mills, trim makers, feather suppliers, shoe manufactories, and milliners. Two upmarket neighborhoods of Paris, the first and the eighth arrondissements, are sometimes referenced in fashion history because they were home to the elite dressmaking salons. But Paris was also the major Western European distribution center for factory-made style merchandise, the go-to place for artistic goods and fashion tips. The tenth arrondissement, also known as the Entrepôt or "warehouse," was a bustling commercial center. This district has two of the city's main railway stations—Gare du Nord and Gare de l'Est—and in walking around the streets today, one can see the old commercial buildings that were essential to the fashion-industrial complex. During the Second

Industrial Revolution, the railroads provided connections to textile centers like Lyon, Saint-Étienne, and Mulhouse. The tenth arrondissement, and the adjacent second, third, and ninth arrondissements, thronged with showrooms, shops, and stores stocked with beautiful goods made throughout Europe. Buyers from all around the continent, Britain, and America flocked there to select goods to sell back home. In 1880, the luxury department store John Wanamaker of Philadelphia became the first American retailer to invest in a resident-buying office in Paris. By 1899, Wanamaker operated a more extensive buying operation in the tenth arrondissement out of a restored historic hôtel at 44, rue des Petites Écuries.[14] After the turn of the century, even American retailers from the hinterlands maintained buying offices in commercial Paris. In 1906, one newspaper in Omaha, Nebraska, featured a lavish advertisement from a local dry-goods emporium that boasted of the "Brandeis Paris Office" in the ninth arrondissement at 1, rue Ambroise Thomas.[15]

As Paris became a global hub for style goods, entrepreneurs determined that the carte de nuance could serve a broader purpose and reach a wider market. French trade associations began using the shade card to promote Paris as a style center. Organizations such as the Chambre syndicale de la confection et de la couture, which oversaw ready-to-wear and haute couture, issued shade cards that were sold by their own offices or by sampling companies such as J. Claude Frères & Cie, at 10, rue d'Uzès in the second arrondissement. Sample companies like Claude also acquired bolts of fabrics from the textile mills and then cut the material into swatches to send to their subscribers, which included other mills, designers, apparel cutters, and retailers. Many of the samples were experimental patterns, "'trial balloons' put out to see whether the public would buy."[16] Between the swatches, trend reports, and color cards, the sample bureaus kept their subscribers abreast of Paris styles. The French shade cards were created by and for the fashion industry, disseminating fashion news straight from the world's fashion capital.

Whether they originated in Paris or Saint-Étienne, French shade cards were exported around the world. In the United States, buyers at dry-goods stores used the French shade cards when selecting the new season's merchandise. Merchants referred to the "late shades from [the] Paris color-card" when advertising newly imported dress goods.[17] In March of 1890, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, a Philadelphia-based national magazine, explained how fashion creators used the shade cards. The "new color-cards show a variety of shades with new French names," noted the *Journal*, "but manufacturers of stuffs and trimmings in both millinery and gowning, continue to ring the changes on a few old favorites, such as reseda, old rose, old blue, heliotrope and beige, the new shades are simply variations of these."[18] Few Americans blindly adhered to the French color cards, but instead used them as a base line to create a palette better suited to the nation's multicultural tastes. When "Paris announces the new shades of the season, we less favored mortals are supposed to bow to the decree," explained the *Journal* in September of 1892, "but if the truth is known our own manufacturers pull the French color-card to pieces, and after gleaning ideas from it and many other directions produce a color-card unsurpassable in variety and beauty."[19]

The carte de nuance was Americanized in the years that immediately followed World War I. The most important fashion intermediary in this transition was Margaret Hayden Rorke (1883–1969), managing director of the Textile Color Card Association of the United States (TCCA, later called the Color Association of the United States or CAUS). This trade association was incorporated in 1915 to handle the problem of color choice for the textile, fashion, and retailing trades when wartime exigencies reduced the steady flow of German dyes and French shade cards to America. The New York textile and garment industries emulated the hues on imported French shade cards until Rorke transformed the business by introducing a new set of color management tools specially created for the American fashion producers who subscribed to the TCCA's service. She looked to Paris for inspiration, but her major objective was to create a triumvirate of color resources—color standards, seasonal color forecasts, and occasional trend reports—that were suited to the growing demand for everyday fashion and the tastes of America's heterogenous mass market.

When Rorke started her position as managing director of the TCCA in 1919, American textile mills were struggling to design stylish goods for a multiethnic society. One silk mill owner who wanted to make "beautiful things" for women's dresses was constantly pressured to produce "a number of rank blues and rotten pinks because the people insist on having them."[20] Rorke's remit was to standardize basic colors for the purpose of helping the textile industry achieve economies of scale and reduce prices, but she also was a dedicated follower of French fashion. She routinely issued Paris-influenced seasonal color forecasts with the aim to uplift tastes in the American market. Rorke secured color information from several sources: from TCCA's corporate members; from studying merchandise in the stores; by watching consumers on the streets; and by communicating with color scouts in Paris. Her color informants in the City of Light included Lucien Schloss at Adolphe Schloss Fils & Cie, a commissionaire at 4, rue Martel in the tenth arrondissement, and Bettina Bedwell, an American-born fashion journalist for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* who worked out of an office in the first arrondissement near the Palais-Royal. Rorke spent her career sitting on a fence, trying to balance quantity production and good taste. Her decisions were informed by fashion developments in Paris and the practical demands of the style scene in New York.

One of Rorke's major fashion contributions was to introduce the concept of color-coordinated accessories to the mass market. Ensemble dressing—the practice of wearing a hat, gloves, handbag, belt, and shoes in matching colors—provided pennywise consumers with an easy way to update their closets. Today, the designer handbag is a coveted investment, often the most expensive part of the wardrobe. Before the luxury tote covered with flashy designer logos became the must-have status symbol of the New Millennium, pocketbooks were simple, affordable, and often locally made. In Rorke's time, a shopper might freshen up her spring-summer look with a new Easter bonnet and matching leather pocketbook from a local fashion store. As late as the 1980s, the matchy-matchy look was the hallmark of a well-turned-out lady, a famous example being British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013), who shopped at Jaeger, an upmarket high-street women's apparel chain, and always carried a large handbag that complemented her suit.[21] From the perspective of manufacturers and retailers, it was imperative that the new season's straw hats were perfectly color harmonized with the new season's leather shoes, or stores would be left with stock they couldn't sell. Ensemble dressing needs to be understood within the context of the Modern era, which valued coordination, consistency, efficiency, and technical virtuosity. Behind the scenes, the shade card, a ubiqutious if unglamourous design tool, was essential to creating the perfect color match.

The Rayon Age

As the discussion of shade cards shows, color effected the fashion business of the Second Industrial Revolution in important ways. Chemistry, engineering, and marketing catapulted Germany to global leadership in dye production and introduced consumers to the idea that color-coordinated outfits were stylish. These transformations took hold at a moment when fabrics were still synonymous with fashion, when the ready-to-wear industry was in the bloom of youth. In the United States, World War I changed the balance of power. The ready-to-wear industry gained momentum by producing military uniforms and practical, stylish civilian clothing. After the war, the trend toward simplified dress accelerated, and American ready-to-wear took off. This development went hand-in-hand with the birth and growth of the man-made fiber industry.

In nineteenth-century Europe, inventors saw a bright future in new textile fibers that could be produced by chemically treating abundant natural materials. Cotton was the dominant textile fiber, with wool, silk, and linen trailing behind. The most desirable fabrics were made from the ultra-fine filaments spun by silkworms, the little inhabitants of mulberry trees that only grew in certain climates, mainly the Far East, southern France, and northern Italy. Because fashion placed a premium on silk, entrepreneurs began looking for ways to produce imitations. The French chemist Louis-Marie Hilaire de Berniguad, Count de Chardonnet (1839–1924), a camera enthusiast, accidently discovered that the nitrocellulose used in photography might be treated to make a silk substitute. "Nitrocellulose" fabrics, known as "Chardonnet silk," were displayed at the Exposition Universelle de Paris in 1889, and within a few years, the Chardonnet artificial silk factory in Besançon, the count's hometown on the Swiss border, ramped up production to commercial scale. Other European inventors followed different pathways. In 1899, a German firm called the Vereinigte Glanzstoff-Fabriken (VGF, or United Factories for Making Lustrous Material) was established in Elberfeld, near Wuppertal, to make fiber by the "cuprammonium" process. A third technique, "acetate," was pioneered by the Swiss brothers Camille and HenryDreyfus who marketed their fiber under the Celanese brand, first in Britain, then in America. But the most important man-made fiber was "viscose," a material reconstituted from the cellulose tissue in wood pulp and in cotton. In 1905, an aging British silk manufacturer named Courtaulds invested in this technology, which proved to be the best method for making artificial silk.[22]

Viscose turned out to be a golden goose for Courtaulds—and a coup de maître for the fashion-industrial complex. In the nineteenth century, Samuel Courtauld & Co. capitalized on the vogue for ladies' black mourning attire set by Queen Victoria after the death of her husband, Prince Albert, in 1861. Courtaulds became the largest English manufacturer of the crimped, stiff, black silk mourning crêpe identified as "crape." When the popularity for crape waned in the mid-1880s, so too did Courtaulds's fortunes.[23] Around the turn of the century, the business was reorganized, and a new generation of managers nudged the firm toward viscose. Within a few short years, Courtaulds had a viscose facility at Coventry in the Midlands and was planning a factory in the United States.[24] By late 1910, the American Viscose Company was up and running in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, an industrial port on the Delaware River between Wilmington and Philadelphia.[25] To the south, the river provided access to the coastal shipping lanes along the East Coast. Upstream sat Philadelphia, the textile capital of America, with dozens of knitting mills and weaving mills, all potential customers for viscose yarns.

During the 1920s, the artificial silk industry grew rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and spread to Japan. Coming out of World War I, the European chemical and textile industries took a long hard look at artificial fibers and woke up to the tremendous potential. They realized that, with economies of scale, man-made textiles could reach a broad swath of the population. The booming ready-to-wear industries in manufacturing centers like Berlin in Germany and Leeds, London, and Manchester in England were always keen to reduce costs and lower prices. The stage was set for a new high-tech industry. Artificial fiber manufactories "grew like mushrooms" on the Continent, and the European textile industry clamored to experiment with the new materials.[26] In 1924, the American makers of artificial silk agreed to give their shiny filament a new name—rayon—to set the product apart from natural silk.[27] Over time, the term *rayon* was adopted around the world as a synonym for cellulose textiles. In 1926, observers noted that the French silk industry was producing the "finest woven fabrics of rayon in the world," mixing natural fibers and man-made materials to achieve blended effects "considered more beautiful than pure silk constructions by some members of the cutting-up trade" in the New York garment district.[28]

In the United States, one important firm to invest in man-made fibers was a chemical manufacturer downriver from the viscose plant at Marcus Hook. During the 1910s, the Wilmington explosives maker, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, started diversifying its product portfolio with lines like artificial leather, plastics, and paints. In 1920, DuPont opened its first man-made fiber plant in Buffalo, New York, through a partnership with a French textile cartel, Comptoir des Textiles Artificiels. American Viscose remained the dominant rayon producer in the United States, but the man-made fiber business expanded as other companies erected plants on American soil.[29] By 1931, one trade publication, the *American Silk Journal*, estimated that, globally, 84 percent of all rayon was made by the viscose process. By this time, the United States accounted for 29 percent of global rayon production.[30]

Rayon making was a complex business that relied on deep technical expertise and an astute awareness of fashion trends. Laboratory workers in the rayon industry, like their counterparts in the dye industry, spent much of their time making incremental improvements to the material. These tweaks were done in response to the needs of textile mills, garment cutters, retailers, and consumers. A brief look at three DuPont rayon developments of the 1920s and 1930s demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between chemical research and the fashion marketplace.

First, let's look at shininess. As the rayon industry tried to penetrate the market for ladies' dress fabrics, the inherent brilliance of the material, so desirable in lingerie, proved to be a liability. In 1926, one trade journal contrasted the "particular richness of sheen and bloom" of real silk to the "harsh brilliance" of rayon, equating silk "to a well-dressed woman, and rayon to an over-dressed woman."[31] In response to the criticism, rayon manufacturers puzzled over how to reduce the ray in the rayon. Because the luster was caused by light reflecting against the surface of the smooth extruded filaments, DuPont researchers determined that the problem was a matter of optics rather than chemistry. The trick was not to eliminate the gloss—some luster was required if rayon fabrics were to resemble silk—but to control the reflection of light, and hence, the sheen. The effort to "de-luster" rayon filament was successful so that by the mid-1930s, DuPont rayon plants had the ability to fine-tune the degree of luster, producing a range of gloss from bright to dull.[32]

Next, let's consider spun rayon, an innovation that allowed textile mills to make artificial fabrics that behaved like cotton, silk, linen, and wool. Spun rayon, also known as staple fiber yarn, was a European development that attracted considerable attention in Germany during World War I, when the textile industry was cut off from imports of natural fibers. By the mid-1930s, continental Europe, led by Germany and Italy, was the locus of spun rayon production with Japan fast catching up.[33] In 1931, DuPont was the only American manufacturer, and after yarn importers and other domestic producers joined the fray, it still maintained a heady dominance.[34] What is spun rayon, and why does it matter to our discussion of technology and fashion? To answer, we must briefly examine the production process. First, the DuPont rayon plant cut the long, mechanically extruded viscose filament into small pieces, creating a material called cut staple. Next, the spinning mills used the cut staple to spin yarns that had the characteristics of natural fibers. These yarns were bulky, fluffy, and soft, much like wool or cotton.[35] Spun rayon offered endless design opportunities at the next production stage, in the weaving mill. The designer could specify spun rayon to create woven fabrics that were intentionally soft and pliable, or purposefully rough and coarse. Early fabrics made from DuPont's spun rayon went into resort wear for the Palm Beach leisure set and into sportwear collections by the Paris couture houses.[36] But textile mills serving the mass market soon began using spun rayon to weave the dressier crepe fabrics relished by the cutters of Seventh Avenue. Between 1931 and 1934, the bulk of spun rayon consumed in the United States went into crepes with printed decorations for ladies' apparel. By 1936, the uses of spun rayon were expanding to include suitings and wool-rayon blends, fabrics that draped softly across the body when sewn up as clothing.[37]

Finally, we can look at the influence of depression-era glamour on rayon fabrics. In the interwar years, women wore formal apparel to parties, concerts, nightclubs, plays, and restaurants. The demand for affordable, ready-made evening attire—dresses, gowns, capes, and cloaks—was met by a rayon cloth called "transparent velvet." DuPont collaborated with firms like Sidney Blumenthal & Co., Inc., a silk broadcloth mill, to design the new fabric. Dressmakers in Paris and New York created the first garments, and upmarket Fifth Avenue shops introduced them to consumers.[38] High-tech velvets gained more attention when Eleanor Roosevelt wore a gown of Blumenthal's Crystelle line in DuPont acetate to the 1933 inaugural ceremonies. Hollywood costume designers, in their relentless pursuit of photogenic looks for the silver screen, began to dress movie stars in the new velvets.[39] The success of transparent velvet, combined with further technical improvements to crepes and other rayon fabrics, was a wake-up call for Seventh Avenue. The New York garment industry began to embrace rayon as a technology for creating affordable everyday luxuries. By the late 1930s, rayon fabrics, blessed with good draping qualities and an affinity for bright colors, were all the rage, replacing silk fabrics in ladies' good dresses. All around Seventh Avenue, the cutting-up trade crowed: "rayons are our best sellers."[40] By 1937, a woman could buy two rayon dresses for less than half the price that her mother paid for one ready-made dress 20 years before.[41]

Exactly how did rayon manufacturers facilitate the acceptance of man-made fibers? We can learn a good deal from DuPont and a marketing activity called fabric development. Located in the company's fiber sales offices in the New York Textile District close to Seventh Avenue, the DuPont Fabric Development Service was managed by a textile specialist named Alexis Sommaripa. Trained at the Harvard Business School and the Lowell Textile School, this Russian émigré had worked as an efficiency engineer at an Alabama textile mill before joining DuPont in 1925.[42] Sommaripa was an expert in statistical analysis, consumer behavior, and textile design. Among his early DuPont projects was a quantitative market survey, conducted jointly with American Viscose and the National Retail Dry Goods Association, on sales of rayon lingerie with attention to consumers' preferences for softness, aesthetics, coolness, hygiene, and economy.[43] By

1929, Sommaripa was managing the Fabric Development Service, a mediation bureau with the remit to connect the firm's rayon factories to the rest of the supply chain—to converters, textile mills, garment manufacturers, and retailers. The aim was to canvas the market, gather trend data, help the laboratories improve the material, develop better fabrics, and convince the trade to adopt DuPont materials. The office set new standards for customer service, shaping DuPont's fiber business, and fabric development in the industry writ large, for years to come. As passionate about freedom as he was about fabrics, Sommaripa died on the Western Front in 1945, while serving as a civilian member of the Psychological Warfare Branch of the US Army.[44] His legacy, as we shall see, was influential into the postwar era.

Test-Tube Fibers and the Midcentury Textile Revolution

When the Great Depression started in October 1929, rayon was still a novelty textile mainly deemed suitable for automobile upholstery, household draperies, men's socks, and ladies' lingerie. By the time World War II broke out in Europe in September 1939, the tables had turned, and Dame Fashion smiled favorably on man-made textiles. Rayon was the preferred fabric for stylish dresses, whether the frocks were sewn at home or purchased readymade from a catalogue or a retail shop. The well-off woman with a wardrobe of specialty dresses for different occasions could chose "Sunday afternoon gowns, street dresses, cruise garments, etc." in various fabrics. But the pennywise shopper who only had "money enough to *buy one garment*" usually selected a dress that showed the "most value for the money, *most frequently a rayon*."[45] Just as Woolworth stores provided budget-conscious chinaware consumers with "beauty for dime," the dress shops that sold rayon ready-to-wear offered access to Hollywood glamour for a few dollars. "The day of the 'Sunday dress' has gone, thanks largely to rayon," wrote one trade journal in 1939, "and every day has become Sunday-dress day."[46]

The cellulose age not only helped to democratize fashion, but it also emboldened scientists to concoct new fibers from almost anything. The hunt for better materials split into two groups. In the first instance, researchers turned to nature and explored if something could be done with soybeans, peanuts, or milk.[47] European researchers developed casein fibers from milk during the 1920s and 1930s, and Americans took notice. In December 1938, chemists at the US Department of Agriculture patented a casein fiber similar to Lanital, an Italian product, and in the fall of 1941, Aralac, Inc., a division of the National Dairy Products Corporation, introduced a protein fiber made from skimmed milk.[48] In the second instance, DuPont chemists sidestepped plants and animals entirely, and using resources from the mineral kingdom, worked to synthesize materials from coal, air, and water. Breakthroughs emerged from DuPont's central research facility in Wilmington in the 1930s, when organic chemists in the field of polymer science created versatile new materials. One end result—announced to the press on October 27, 1938, and widely publicized at the world's fairs in San Francisco (1939) and New York (1939–1940)—was the world's first synthetic fiber: nylon.[49] Inspired by DuPont's success, a polymer chemist at the Calico Printers' Association, a textile firm in Manchester, England, developed polyester, another synthetic fiber. Nylon was principally used by the American military during the war, and polyester was classified as top secret by the British authorities until the return of peace, when Imperial Chemical Industries commercialized as it as Terylene. These two test-tube fibers launched the synthetics age.

In the postwar years, DuPont came to dominate synthetics globally due to its first-mover advantages in nylon, which included a strong patent position.[50] Nylon became the company's most profitable product, and seeking to repeat the hat trick, DuPont invested heavily in fiber development. The firm obtained the American rights for polyester from the British patent holders, producing and marketing this fiber under the trade name Dacron. DuPont also pressed ahead with laboratory research that resulted in Orlon acrylic, a washable, moth-proof synthetic wool. Another innovation was Lycra spandex, the ultimate stretch fiber.[51] Andrew E. Buchanan Jr., a manager for DuPont fibers, paid tribute to corporate science when he jokingly noted that humans could now make a "better fiber by design than a sheep produces inadvertently."[52]

But science alone could not ensure success in the competitive postwar business environment. The economic and social context of the synthetics age was dramatically different from the rayon era. Europe lay in shambles, its major industries in ruins. The United States experienced losses, but the industrial heartland was unscathed. In the 1950s and 1960s, Americans enjoyed a rising standard of living that was unparalleled elsewhere. With affluence came a greater awareness of individuality in everything from politics to personal style. Stereotypes about cookie-cutter suburbs aside, postwar America was the incubator of the culture of diversity. Firms like DuPont looked for ways to capitalize on this enormous, multifaceted market. The firm continued the practice, established by the Fabric Development Service, of working closely with customers to secure feedback on the products and to scope out emerging market trends. DuPont also invested in prestige building, national advertising, and consumer research.

The rayon age stretched well into the 1950s, but inch by inch, synthetics made inroads, pushing aside cellulose and natural fibers alike. Firms like DuPont, the Chemstrand Corporation (a joint venture between American Viscose and the Monsanto Chemical Company), and the Celanese Corporation of America were aggressive in their efforts to put synthetics in the public eye.[53] But the fiber makers couldn't achieve recognition in the fashion world on their own. Test-tube fibers needed the endorsement of the global tastemakers. Back in the interwar years, the American rayon makers, emulating their counterparts in silk, established commercial ties to fashion trendsetters on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. But World War II, and the generational shift that followed, severed those aesthetic lifelines.

DuPont established prestige for test-tube textiles by connecting to the newly revitalized Paris couture houses. With great fanfare, the couturier Christian Dior, renowned for his New Look of 1947, visited Wilmington on November 9, 1953, to meet with DuPont executives, tour the laboratories, and discuss the use of synthetics in his collections.[54] Dior was astounded by nylon, signaling his personal approval by installing curtains made from this material in his Paris apartment. His recent New York collection included a Dacron polyester ladies' suit with a full pleated skirt, and he predicted a bright future for "les mélanges des fibres," or blended fabrics.[55] One inhouse DuPont history indicated that the firm subsequently rolled out the red carpet for the young couturier Hubert de Givenchy, fashion editors from *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, and leading retail executives to stimulate further interest in synthetics and style.[56]

DuPont had its satisfaction in early 1954, when important French couturiers featured synthetics in their spring-summer models. That February, Givenchy introduced DuPont synthetics to Paris with shirtdresses in French fabrics created from Orlon-silk blends.[57] During the major shows in March, the venerable couturiers Christian Dior and Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel both featured models made from DuPont fibers, particularly nylon[58]

Figure 3.2 This black-and-white striped afternoon dress, made from a crisp, wrinkled plissé of 100 percent DuPont nylon, was shown by Coco Chanel in March 1954, at her first Paris showing in 16 years. Courtesy, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE, USA.

(Figure 3.2). The American chemical giant was soon collaborating with other designers in the Chambre syndicale de la couture parisienne, a trade group for the exclusive dressmakers, to produce DuPont Paris collections. Within a few short years, DuPont established relationships with major knitwear designers in Italy, and a new group of couturiers in New York, including the Paris-born Pauline Trigère. In the 1960s, the firm worked with American ready-to-wear designers and manufacturers in New York, Los Angeles, and Dallas and with apparel makers in Florence, London, Milan, and Paris. A new international office in Geneva helped to coordinate collaborations, promotions, and advertising campaigns in Europe.

In the United States, fashion promotion fell under the purview of Jane Stewart Denton, a publicist at the DuPont offices in the Empire State Building in New York, who had served as the press liaison on style matters since joining the firm in 1933.[59] Starting in 1939, Denton was involved in promoting new products, including nylon. In 1954, she initiated DuPont's coverage of the postwar French couture collections to publicize the use of fabrics made with DuPont fibers. Under her auspices, the New York office flew the DuPont Paris collection to major cities around the United States, where department stores, fashion retailers, and country clubs enlisted stylish young socialites to model the couture outfits in charity fashion shows.[60] The New York office added the couture models to the large library of reference materials, including fabric swatches, that it maintained for use by textile and fashion designers. The couture models were also shown in special DuPont runway shows for the press, textile mills, and garment cutters. These fashion events were held in New York, mainly, and in two regional fashion hubs, Dallas and Los Angeles. The DuPont Paris designs reached a broader audience when Denton and her staff circulated photographs to countless local newspapers, which published them in the women's pages.

The postwar fiber industry bombarded the American public with promotions that touted the practicality and stylishness of synthetics. Print advertisements appeared in family magazines like *Saturday Evening Post*; in homemakers' favorites such as *Good Housekeeping*; specialty publications like *The Bride's Magazine*; and fashion glossies like *Harper's Bazaar*, *Seventeen*, and *Vogue*. Large American corporations took advantage of the newest advertising medium, television, and sponsored TV shows such as the *Celanese Theatre* and *The United States Steel Hour*. DuPont underwrote the *Cavalcade of America* and the *DuPont Show of the Month*, which featured commercials for its products. With fibers, DuPont targeted teenaged Baby Boomers by supporting the nation's favorite dance show, *American Bandstand* with Dick Clark (1929–2012), and housewives by offering the weekly drama series, *The DuPont Show with June Allyson*. A petite blonde actress from Broadway and Hollywood, June Allyson (1917–2006) introduced each episode wearing test-tube outfit designed by one of the New York couturiers, suggesting that, in the nylon age, the girl-next-door could wrap herself in affordable synthetic elegance.[61]

The DuPont advertising blitz was backed by an impressive program of market research. The textile fibers department built on the statistical surveys undertaken by Alexis Sommaripa before the war, but considerably expanded the surveillance. Intelligence came from multiple sources, including an internal corporate marketing unit, advertising agencies, media experts, and motivational research consultants. A massive amount of data was assembled. In 1959, the DuPont market research division alone compiled close to 70 reports analyzing the attitudes of retailers and consumers toward different textiles, from men's knitted underwear to nylon sheets.[62] In any given year, internal reports were supplemented with studies by external authorities like Ernest Dichter, one of the founding fathers of motivational research and the principal at the renowned consulting firm, the Institute for Motivational Research. In 1962, one textile fibers manager, Arthur M. Saunders, described DuPont's approach to market research. Put succinctly, the company had transformed the "relatively simple 'art' of selling fabric" into the "complicated 'science' of marketing."[63]

Over the course of the 1960s, the synthetics age moved from adolescence to early adulthood. By the decade's end, the American textile industry produced more fabrics from synthetic fibers than from natural fibers. Europe was slower to adopt test-tube textiles, but this changed as the British, French, German, and Italian industries rebuilt their manufacturing sectors and as an emerging cohort of ready-to-wear designers acknowledged the suitability of synthetics to casual living.[64] As the largest fiber maker in the world's largest economy, DuPont was instrumental in reorienting fashion around contemporary values. By 1969, the frilly nylon dresses shown by Coco Chanel and Christian Dior back in 1954 seemed fussy, formal, and outmoded. The new look of the time was casual, comfortable, and convenient, as exemplified by the designs of Daniel

Figure 3.3 The Daniel Hechter sportswear collection for DuPont, introduced in June of 1969, embodied the new trend toward casual styling and made good use of synthetic fabrics dyed with synthetic colors. Courtesy, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE, USA.

Hechter, a young ready-to-wear guru based in Paris. "Sportswear," he declared, "is the only fashion that is up-to-date in the twentieth century."[65] The Daniel Hechter sportswear collection for DuPont, introduced at a New York fashion show for the trade on June 24, 1969, consisted of ten ensembles, all made from jerseys and other knitted fabrics in Antron nylon, Dacron-wool blends, and Orlon acrylic. One youthful outfit consisted of a tailored jacket with oversized pockets, wide argyle flared trousers, and a big matching scarf, all in 100 percent Orlon acrylic fiber (Figure 3.3). The dyes and the fibers were all synthetic, and the style reflected the lifestyle trends of the moment.[66] If William Henry Perkin or Alexis Sommaripa had been alive, they would likey have delighted in the outcome.

Toward a New History of Technology and Fashion

Some contemporary observers believed that the dramatic improvement in American material life could be soley attributed to the chemical research laboratories of the Second Industrial Revolution. In 1933, the popular magazine, *Collier's,* noted that rayon, "a chemical invention, has done much to wipe out social distinction reflected in women's clothing." The editors argued that chemistry "made attractive fabrics cheap and women of all economic classes began to wear the same kind of clothes." In their minds, the fashion makeover occurred by happenstance, with little or no attention to economy and culture by the chemical industry. "The chemists who were experimenting with cellulose were not," they wrote, "thinking about social conditions."[67]

Collier's editors embraced a heroic view of invention, in which scientific discovery trumped design and marketing in the advancement of living standards. But there was more to mauve millinery and Lycra leotards than breakthroughs by lab workers in white coats. This chapter on visibly invisible technologies—dyes, shade cards, man-made textiles, and test-tube fibers—has looked deep into the fashion-industrial complex to highlight human agency at different nodes in the supply chain. The analysis began with a biographical vignette of the scientist William Henry Perkin to explore the work of one celebrated inventor before segueing into a discussion of influential fashion intermediaries who have been long been missing from fashion history. As we saw, mediators like Margaret Hayden Rorke, Alexis Sommaripa, and Jane Stewart Denton thought long and hard about society and culture as they connected industry to the marketplace. Through their work, chemical innovations had consequences for the ateliers of Paris and the garment cutters of Seventh Avenue. "Class distinctions labeled in Chardonnet's time by clothes have disappeared in an America where the average stenographer is now as well dressed as her employer's wife and daughters," noted the *Rayon Textile Monthly* in 1939.[68] In their view, man-made fibers had "become one of the greatest democratizing influences in American life."[69] This sea change would have been impossible without interventions all along the supply chain. Technology, aided by intermediaries aware of evolving tastes and business circumstances, held sway in the fashion-industrial complex, and ultimately, enabled the democratization of fashion.

Notes

1 On the "fashion-industrial complex," see Blaszczyk, *Producing Fashion*, chap. 1, and Blaszczyk, "Hidden Spaces," in *Handbook of Fashion Studies*, 181–96. On "fashion intermediaries," see Blaszczyk, *Imagining Consumers*, and Blaszczyk, *Color Revolution*.
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3 C. F. Cross, "Research in the Field of Cellulose," *Rayon* 2 (April 30, 1926): 8.
4 John A. Collins, "American Rayon and the Tariff," *Rayon* 1 (Oct. 27, 1925): 14.
5 Cross, "Research."
6 Anthony S. Travis, "Perkin, Sir William Henry"; Jack Morrell, "Perkin, William Henry," and idem, "Perkin, Arthur George," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, at oxforddnb.com (accessed July 10, 2023).
7 George Rice, "New Fabrics from Pulp of Wood, Paper and Cotton," part 6, *Rayon* 3 (Sept. 30, 1926): 12–13 (quotation, 12).
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Unless otherwise noted, this discussion of The Carte de Nuance as a Design Tool draws on Blaszczyk, *Color Revolution*; Blaszczyk and Spiekermann, ed., *Bright Modernity*; and Blaszczyk and Wubs, ed., *Fashion Forecasters*.
11 Coupe échantillon, Echantillon des colouers, des métaux et des lustres en usage Vers 1805, Inv. MNC 2 517–4, Envoi de M. Baumgartner, directeur de la Manufacture impériele de Vienne, 1838, and Coupe énchantillon de forme calice, Enchantillon des couleurs, des métaux et des

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14 On the Paris office, see *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores* (Philadelphia: John Wanamaker, 1911), 195–202.
15 J. L. Brandeis & Sons, advertisement, *Sunday World-Herald* (Omaha, NE), July 15, 1906.
16 F. L. Lewton, Curator, Division of Crafts and Industries, Memorandum for filing with acc. 55517: Hamilton Print Works, Aug. 24, 1945, Textile Collection, Cultural and Community Life, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, DC [hereafter cited as TC-NMAH].
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19 "The New Autumn Colors," *Ladies' Home Journal* 9 (Sept. 1892): 20.
20 Untitled clipping from *Paterson* (NJ) *Morning Call*, Nov. 1, 1919, in Scrapbook: Publicity Clippings, 1915–1923, acc. 2188: Records of the Inter-Society Color Council, Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE [hereafter cited as HML].
21 Victoria Moss, "How Margaret Thatcher Turned Her Handbag into a Weapon," *Vogue* (London), Nov. 27, 2020, at https://www.vogue.co.uk/ (accessed July 10, 2023).
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4 The Global Trade of the Wax Fabric

Anne Grosfilley

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, wax print became a symbol of Africa. Its vibrant colors and striking patterns reflect the energy of this rising continent, endowed with a talented generation of artists questioning the world they live in. This fabric has emerged as a perfect way of reflecting the complex relationship between Europe, Africa, and Asia since the imperialist context. Wax print symbolizes the meeting of cultures and at the same time emphasizes the specific role of textile among African people. Well beyond being a simple piece of cloth, it is usually the subject of passionate debates about its authentic African-ness. Inspired by the Indonesian batik, industrialized by Dutch manufacturers, and worn by African people, it stands out as a brilliant example of—in the words of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger—an "invented tradition."[1] Nevertheless, this global fabric's success story might be described as unforeseen, given the original targeted market, the imperfections of the printing process, the various interpretations of the designs, and the use of the fabric.

Inventing a Tradition

During the nineteenth century, textile production was a key element in expressing both local industrial strength and influence in overseas territories. England and Holland competed in this field. Between 1811 and 1816, England occupied and began to import cotton goods to the Indonesian archipelago. By 1816 the Dutch took over the island of Java, and were engaged in Sumatra and in the various phases of the Padri war (1803–19, 1819–38, 1839–45).[2] Officially, they were fighting to preserve the local population from radical Muslims, but this proved to be, above all, a pretext to excuse the expansion of control of crucial commercial routes. The Haarlem Cotton Company (HKM-Haarlemse Katoen Maatschappij) benefited widely from this new trading opportunity by obtaining the monopoly of textile imports to Java. Haarlem became the major textile area in northern Holland, where Prévinaire & Wilson got established in 1834. Helmond became the textile center in the south, where P. F. van Vlissingen & Co started to print cottons in 1848.

Industrializing a Craft Technique: From Batik to Wax Print

Like the English production of chintz copied Indian textiles and sold them back to India, the Dutch created industrial batik to compete with the small-scale handcrafted Javanese production. Mechanizing the batik process was complex. The design is created by drawing patterns on both sides of the cloth with melted wax, which prevents the dye from penetrating the fabric. This process is called resist printing. Once the wax is washed away, the

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parts previously covered appear white, contrasting with the dyed elements. Then, additional colors may be applied. The traditional process is very time-consuming, as all the design is painted by hand, with the wax applied from a small copper tool called a *canting*.

To get the same double-sided effect and achieve a quality result mechanically was not an easy task. Jean-Baptiste Théodore Prévinaire was inspired by an engine used to print bank notes, the *perrotine*, to create a machine he called the *javanaise*.[3] By 1875, Prévinaire's son, Marie Prosper Theodore, replaced it by a duplex engraved copper roller mechanism to synchronize wax printing on both sides of the fabric. Because genuine beeswax is used in Javanese batik, these prints have been called *wax prints*. Nevertheless, the industrial process does not use animal-sourced wax, but a vegetal resin. Resist printing is the essential phase in wax print making, but it is only one of over 20 stages of the full process, from the grey material to the finished fabric.[4] Without going into excessive detail, it is necessary to explain the various effects that are generated by the action of wax printing. This resist printing process is followed by dyeing in an indigo vat or with a different color called *sepic*, which will reveal the design through the uncovered parts of the fabric. It is possible either to get a very neat effect by dyeing straight after the resin is applied or to obtain a cracked background by slightly breaking the resin before dyeing. The intensity of the cracks can be controlled, but not their exact placing. Details in the designs, especially background filling patterns such as little hooks or wavy lines, can only restrict very dramatic undesirable effects (Figure 4.1).

The subsequent colors are applied manually with wooden blocks covered with a felt layer. Again, if a colored *marbling* effect is wanted, the resin will only be partially washed away before *blocking*. It is also possible to get a *bubbling* effect by preserving small spots of resin that will provide some lighting to the pattern. Colors applied when the wax is totally removed give a *solid* intense hue. The deep penetration and the quality of the dye give the feeling that it is printed on both sides of the fabric, with virtually no reverse.

The use of wax or resin creates an unpredictable result, making each meter unique. What makes wax print prized as an original and luxury fabric is its perfect imperfections linked to the random effects of wax and the slight misfit of colors due to hand blocking. Nevertheless, these elements were not very valuable in the Indonesian market, and Prévinaire and HKM met with limited success in Java for various reasons. Firstly, the value ascribed to the imperfections of the prints in the West was due to a cultural misunderstanding; in Java, the cracks and bubbles were perceived as defects, reducing the fabric's value. During the decades it took to the Dutch industry to achieve wax printing, the Dutch authorities had lost their supremacy. By 1872, commercial imports from Holland stopped receiving special economic preference. On top of that, Javanese batik makers had created copper stamps (*cap*) to improve their productivity, developing a more affordable product than the elite hand-designed batik.

Despite this limited success, HKM was satisfied by the quality and the uniqueness of this new process. Indonesia may not have been the ideal market for this product, and the company was hoping it could find more receptive customers elsewhere in the world. By chance, a Scottish trader did the perfect connection. He was called Ebenezer Brown Fleming.

Introducing Wax Print to the West African Market

Ebenezer Brown Fleming, an agent of Haarlem Cotton Company in Glasgow, was aware that Indonesia was not the best market for Dutch wax prints, although he was convinced

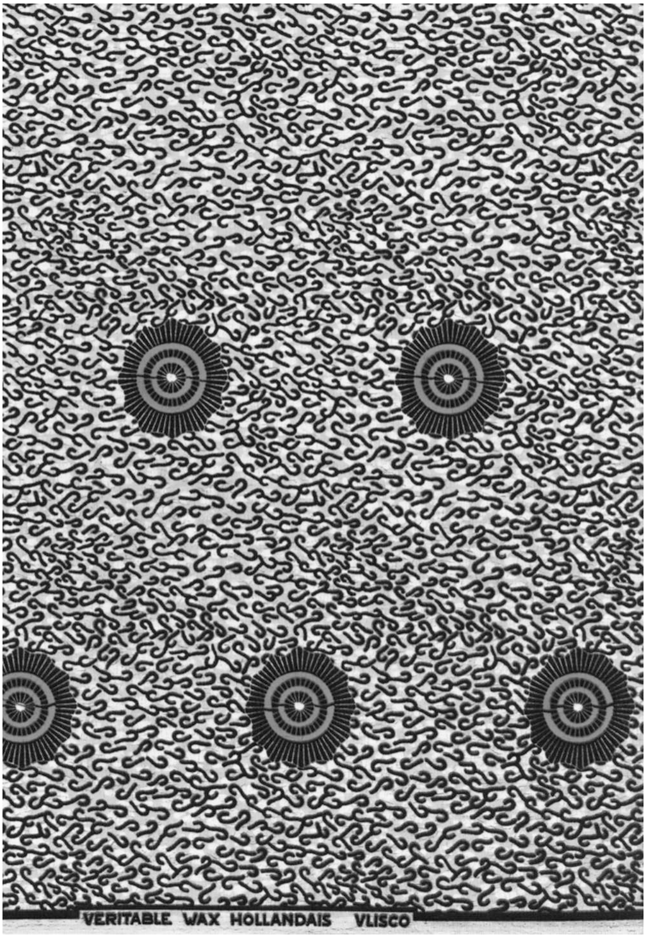

Figure 4.1 Including small hooks in the background of the early designs intended to prevent unwanted cracks of the wax during the dyeing process. Through the years, these small graphic patterns have become emblematic visual elements of many wax prints. (Photograph and collection Anne Grosfilley).

by the quality and the potential of the product. Fleming knew that understanding specific tastes and cultures was a valuable advantage, and to that end he was in contact with the best informants of the time: the missionaries.[5] One of his wholesale customers was the Basel Mission Trading Company, which was well established in the Gold Coast, today known as Ghana. Missionaries told Fleming that many changes were occurring there as a result of contacts with Europeans. Owing to the region's gold mines, commercial exchanges were growing and the local elite was looking for new qualities of fabric to express its wealth ostentatiously. Textiles were an important element in social life, and there was a dynamic local production of woven *kente* and indigo tie-dye. Nevertheless, imported fabrics were also very much appreciated as a way to show off. As part of its program to develop economic autonomy through crafts and agriculture, the Christian mission introduced the sewing machine to help young girls to learn how to make garments, which in turn created a demand for thin imported material, as the local hand-woven textiles, traditionally wrapped around the body, were too thick to be sewn.

The introduction of wax print in Africa was also influenced by the enrolment of soldiers from the Gold Coast in the Dutch army to fight in Java. After 20 years spent there, they would have brought batik back home as gifts for their relatives. Although it seems difficult to find reliable evidence on the subject, this story has become the "official legend" told by wax print makers in the late twentieth century.

These factors led Fleming to target the Gold Coast with a shipment of wax prints. Instead of selling only the traditional batik designs sent to Indonesia, he diversified the offer by introducing new graphic elements. His main concern was to send compositions specifically adapted to this West African market. So, besides *tumpal* (bamboo shoots) and Garuda wings (Vishnu's bird) patterns, he proposed elements relating to ancient Egypt, illustrations of proverbs from the Ashanti wisdom, and symbols of the local kingdoms. He was also inspired by African tie-dye, and developed a range of designs with a solid deep indigo background contrasting with stand-out patterns and boasting radiating effects.

One of Fleming's very early popular designs—dating back to 1895, and still very popular in 2021—represents an open hand containing 12 English shillings in the palm beside a row of spare fingers (Figure 4.2).

According to John Picton,[6] it could refer to an Ashanti proverb stating that "the palm of the hand is sweeter than the back of the hand." This design might also illustrate the motto "unity is strength." To become such a bestseller, the original version has been adapted to please the first African customers, who were Ga and Akan women from the Gold Coast.

The original width of wax print textiles used in Indonesian sarongs, which are wrapped around the waist and end at the knee, was 36 inches (c.91 cm). Ghanaian women wore their wrapper down to the ankle, so they began to add a strip at the bottom of the fabric to make it 48 inches long (c.122 cm). In time, the designs were extended to meet this new use, standardizing the wax print to a 48-inch width. The setting of the designs has also been reoriented from warp to weft alignment. To get a nice drop in sewing, European textile industries usually set patterns along the warp. Nevertheless, when wax prints were used as wrappers, the warp ran not vertically but horizontally and as a result patterns were turned though 90°. Through these changes of design, size, and setting, wax prints have gradually become pieces of fabric specifically intended for the Ghanaian markets.

A Shared Valuable Legacy

By 1914 the Dutch production of wax print was occurring widely in Europe: besides Haarlem, with HKM, Deventer became the center of the renowned colorist N. V. Ankersmit, and in Helmond P. F. van Vlissingen had also started to produce wax prints since 1906. The Swiss company UTC (United Trading Company), based in Glarus, also produced these fabrics.

England played a major role in terms of both commerce and production. The Dutch wax prints were traded to Africa by the English company F. & A. Swanzy. In addition, a network of nine companies around Manchester became involved in wax printing. The most important was F. W. Ashton and Co. of Newton Bank Print Works, based in Hyde.

By 1917, after the death of Ebenezer Brown Fleming, HKM went into liquidation and van Vlissingen bought 40 engraved pairs of copper rollers and six sample books. Most of the other archives have not been preserved. As a Scottish, Fleming had legally registered, in

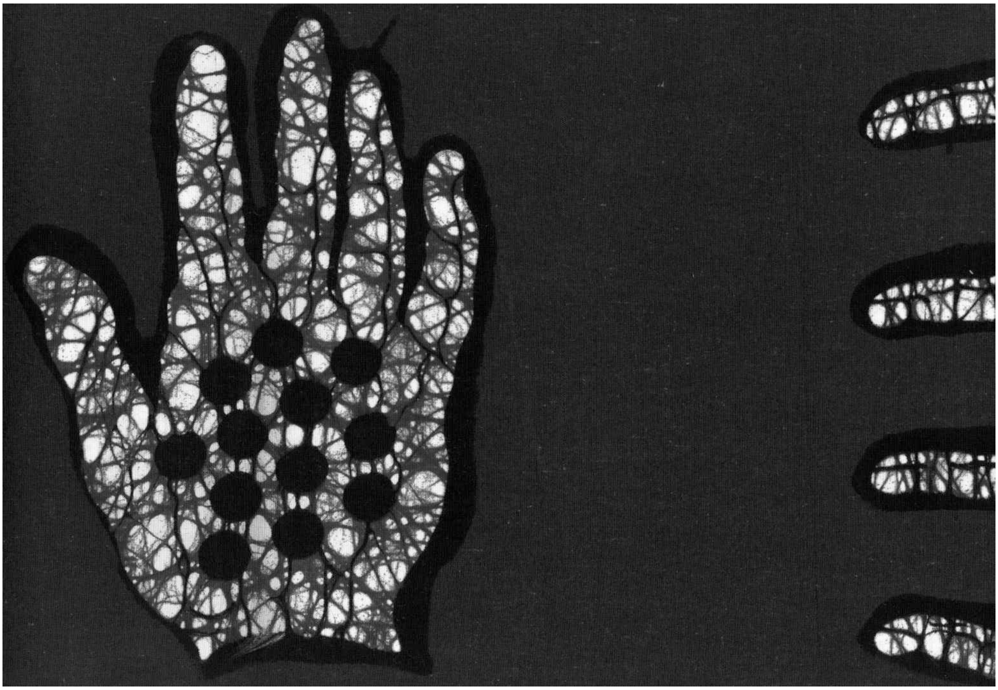

Figure 4.2 "Hand and fingers." Original wax print by Ebenezer Brown Fleming. 1895. (Photograph and collection Anne Grosfilley).

the United Kingdom, all these designs printed in Haarlem. Therefore, the English wax print company members of the Calico Printers Association were also entitled to print these early wax print designs upon the payment of royalties. This common glossary, shared by Dutch and English competitors, became a very sensitive issue, as no one company was more legitimate an owner of the designs than another. They thus became called the *contentious designs*, or the *classics*. They have profoundly impacted the aesthetic of wax print, and have been reproduced ever since with great success.[7] By 2020, it was estimated that the classics nearly represented 80 percent of the production of the Dutch company Vlisco (the new branding name for P. F. van Vlissingen since 1970). Besides that, English and Dutch designers have used some elements of these designs as a glossary to compose new ones, playing with the setting and the size in various combinations.

A Growing and Diversified Market

If the success of wax print was undoubtedly linked to the intuition of Ebenezer Brown Fleming, African women have also played a major role in transforming these "simple" pieces of fabric into elements of a language. Ghanaian women were the first customers of European wax print, but the popularity of its unique style has quickly seduced surrounding markets. By 1930, some Mina and Ewé women from the Aneho region, in the southeast of Togo, were going weekly to the Ghanaian border to buy beads and fabric to sell back home. Some of them were attracted by the wax prints, as the fabric had a stunning quality and hue, in comparison to the fancy prints that were also imported from

Europe to Africa at the time. They started buying bulk quantities and were reselling them very well in Togo. They wanted to organize their business from Lomé, the capital city, in order to avoid tiresome regular traveling, and also to become wholesalers.[8]

The Power of the Nana Benz and the Language of the Designs

Unilever (the successor of F. & A. Swanzy from 1930) agreed to sell wax print fabrics through these Togolese traders. The main houses of commerce based on the Gulf of Guinea, UAC (United Africa Company) and CFAO (Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale), became the main distributors of wax print between 1930 and the end of the 1990s. Each of them had specific Dutch designs, and CFAO also represented the English producers. The Togolese women chose the designs they wanted to order from a range pre-selected by the UAC and CFAO Togo agents, and it was shipped to Lomé by container. The *assigamé* (the big market of Lomé) became *the* wax print entrepôt. The fabric was sold by 12-yard pieces to retail dealers, who sold the fabric by 6-yard pieces to individuals in Lomé, all over Togo, and even in other African countries.

To organize the market, each woman chose specific designs, different from those of other sellers. In order to obtain exclusivity over these, they had to order hundreds of pieces and to pay cash, because credit had never been allowed in the trade. Only about 28 women managed to be accepted into this very restricted group of wax print wholesalers, but they managed to make a real fortune.[9] Some of them, like Patience Sanvee, could order at peak times up to a container per week. Some of them had not been to school, but they were good at counting and they could speak several African languages, enabling them to deal with buyers from various places. They invested some of their money in high education, sending their children to famous European and American universities, bought apartments in posh Parisian areas, and supported philanthropic projects such as church building. But what made them so famous is the fact that they were the first people in Togo to own Mercedes-Benz cars. That strong symbol of their wealth, which made them visually remarkable, led to their nickname: *Nana Benz*—Nana being the term for a powerful woman in Togo.

Beside the glamorous dimension of being a Nana Benz, there was considerable responsibility on the traders to choose the right designs and to be able to sell all the ordered stock. They had to make the perfect selection and attract customers to "their" designs. As a marketing strategy they associated particular names with their chosen designs to make them more memorable and desirable. The naming of textile patterns was already common practice in the craft production, but the novelty of wax print naming was that the names referred not to the usual subjects of cosmogony and ancestors but to urban culture and everyday life. When a new design arrived on the stall the first customers usually commented on their interpretation of the main pattern. The trader took the name she would then associate with the design from those comments, picking the one she found the most evocative, the most relevant, and the most current. In that way wax print gradually became the voice of women. Marital issues became the key subject among the early designs. At a time when official or unofficial polygamy was important, women sent messages to each other via the wax print design they would wear. Patterns with names such as "The eye of my rival," "I can run faster than my rival," "my husband is able," or "your foot, my foot" were worn as warnings: without any words spoken out loud, they could send sharp messages.

Thanks to the success of their first orders, the traders managed to extend their exclusive monopoly over the designs for life. Becoming in a way their "owner," they started to alternate the availability of the designs, putting some on the market and then taking them off for some time (sometimes several years) to make them irresistibly desirable when available again. There has always been patterns that could be considered average standard fare for Dutch and English wax print, but by playing on the offer and the demand, the most desired design could reach very high prices, as there was only one place it could be bought from. The most expensive design on the Togolese market was a rib vault effect pattern called "Woman of Lomé," which is a compulsory element of the dowry for all weddings.

Regulated by Nana Benz, wax print has become much more than a simple piece of fabric. It is a luxury product from Europe, as precious as a French fragrance, but also an element of African cultures. Lomé has become the center of a wide market, from which customers from all over West and Central Africa are supplied. Photographs by Malian Seydou Keita from the late 1940s show many women from Bamako, Mali, wearing a dress made of Dutch wax print to show off to the camera—perhaps for the only picture taken in their entire life.[10] It was a sign of distinction, especially in this Sahel area, to own European fabric that came from Lomé, over a chaotic road trip of 1,800 km (Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

A Precious Expertise

The Nana Benz became experts on the different tastes of each region, in terms of style and size of design and color combinations. For example, the Nigerian Igbo market preferred red and yellow; the Baule people from the Ivory Coast would look for a white background to wear around the Easter period, and the Agni from Ghana and the Ivory Coast would wear brown and red for funerals and mourning. In order to get the perfect match between design and color, the European wax print companies would elaborate various color combinations for each design. It was sometimes possible to choose between 50 different possibilities, changing the colors or their setting on the design, or offering different intensities of cracking and bubbling—the various markets were also concerned with the effect of the wax printing process. Therefore, one specific design could be popular in various territories, but each market would go for a different version of it. The success of a design seemed to rely on a correlation of many random elements that made it irresistibly appealing. Not all the designs were systematically named, and most of them were printed only once and then disappeared from the market forever. Creating a classic in wax print has always been difficult, as the African markets can be hard to please: they won't buy something they don't like. Some wholesalers have tried to name designs that failed to sell in order to boost their popularity, but designs became popular because they acquired a name via the interactions described above, not because they had names imposed upon them.

The power of the Nana Benz was in their ability to select designs and organize the market. They were not designers, but they sometimes suggested to Vlisco what kind of patterns they would like, such as a hibiscus flower or a particular object. Before 1930, not a single European designer of wax print had traveled to Africa. All the designs were created from their imagination, their personal perceptions of the African continent, and descriptions in ethnographic books. In the 1990s, the artistic director of the English company ABC (A. Brunnschweiler & Co.) was still working in this way, not feeling the necessity to physically meet the African customers and experience the atmosphere of the market, the flamboyance of everyday life. The Dutch designers were innovators, taking

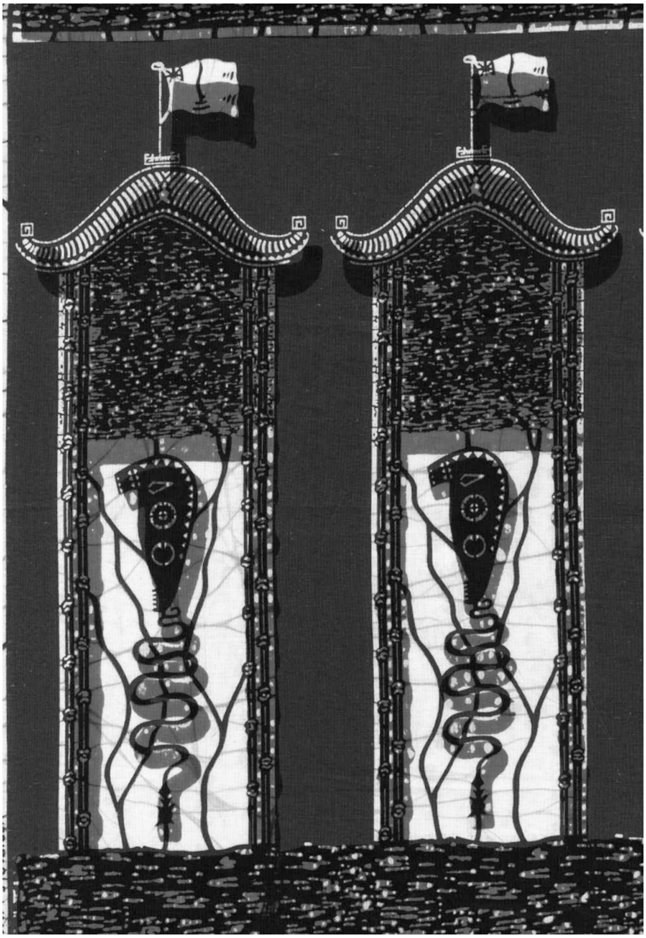

Figure 4.3 Staff of kingship design, renamed "Apollo rocket" and "corkscrew." ABC A13062. (Photograph and collection Anne Grosfilley).

risks in terms of graphic styles and proposing new themes for designs. The English were, rather, followers, inspired by the trends initiated by their competitor.

The fact that wax print was mainly designed by White European men for Black African ladies can explain the gap that could be found sometimes between the intended designs and their perception in the African markets. This might appear predictable when it is considered that many graphic elements were borrowed from the Indonesian culture. For example, the pattern of the Garuda bird has been called in Togo "the snail out of its shell," referring to someone constantly curious about goings-on in the neighbourhood instead of minding their own business. Despite such large discrepancies between patterns' intended meaning and the African interpretation, European designers have nevertheless perceived their designs becoming part of the limited group of particularly popular patterns as a sign of recognition.

For years, wax print designs have reflected European projections on African cultures. Through the intuition and perception of the Nana Benz some of these designs acquired

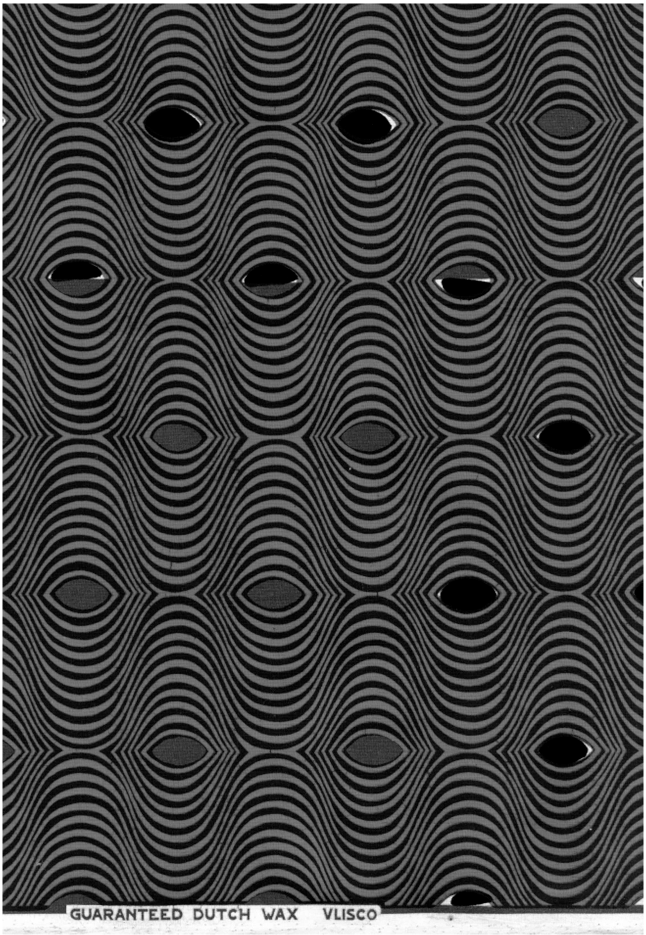

Figure 4.4 "The eye of my rival." This design, created by Vlisco in 1949, is identifiable in several pictures by Malian photographer Seydou Keita. (Photograph and collection Anne Grosfilley).

an African dimension, becoming the voice of the women who wore them. A production starting in African countries became another step in the process of Africanization.

The Mirror of Changing Societies

From the 1960s, following the Independence of Black African countries, textile mills have contributed to the continent's industrialization. Beside spinning and weaving facilities, there were also companies specializing in printing genuine wax print or fancy print, a basic imitation printed on only one side of the fabric. This fancy print production was quite important, as there was at least one factory in each country: Sotiba Simpafric in Senegal, Enitex in Niger, Itema and Comatex in Mali, Utexi and Cotivo in the Ivory Coast, Sobetex in Benin, Faso Fani in Upper Volta (today Burkina Faso), Cicam in Cameroon, and so on. These companies were mainly funded by public investments. In contrast, the wax print units established in Africa were part of European groups. In Ghana and the Ivory Coast, GTP (Ghana Textiles Printing Company) and Uniwax developed with the support of Vlisco. In a different way, the English company ABC became linked to ATL (AKosombo Textile Limited) in Ghana, Nichem and UNTL (United Nigeria Textiles) in Nigeria, and CPA (Calico Printers Association) in Zaïre (actual Democratic Republic of the Congo). They all became part of the Hong Kong–based Cha Group.

Europe as a Reference of Quality in Independent Africa

What is remarkable is that, instead of looking for locally created designs and promoting original prints made in Africa, the various markets across West and Central Africa continued to want the European style.[11] The bulk of the African production has reproduced the most popular Dutch and English designs. Therefore, when a rich, influential woman, such as the first lady, wore a design in public, most of the women wanted to wear the same. They could do so according to their purchasing power: the richest could buy the original Dutch wax, the middle class would go for the Uniwax version and the less fortunate would buy a fancy print. Changing a single detail in a pattern was enough to avoid accusation of copying. Therefore, successful designs elaborated by Vlisco could be produced in a dozen similar versions. The names given to the original European designs were also attached to these counterfeits. The language of wax print designs was therefore shared among all social levels of the population.

This situation illustrates that the value of local wax print until the 2000s was linked to European expertise. It had nothing to do with African authenticity. Wax print was perceived as a blend of a European product given life on the African markets by African women. In a very paradoxical way, it is interesting to mention that even Marshall Mobutu actively promoted English wax prints. The president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, then Zaïre, between 1965 and 1997, Mobutu took a very strong position against imperialism: he banned the naming of newborn babies with a Christian name, for instance, and prohibited the use of the tie in men's formal costume. Nevertheless, he had personally placed several orders of 250,000 yards of ABC wax prints figuring his portrait in a medallion, to be worn by the crowd attending his official speeches.

For decades, wearing European wax print was a way to get access, even only once in a lifetime, to pure luxury. It was essential for women to wear the "right" colors, to follow the trend and be part of a fashion community. But, gradually, it was no longer enough for the elite. Wealthy established women wanted something extra to distinguish themselves from the African prints. So, by 1973, the Dutch company Vlisco developed a new supreme quality called *Super wax* on fine fabric (117 g/m²), with one additional color (meaning that two colors are printed with the marbling effect, and the third is solid). This particular style, priced at about 30 percent more than a usual wax print, has become very much appreciated in Central Africa and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the most popular designs of this new range is known as "onions."

Introducing unconventional combinations of colors has also seduced some members of the upper classes. New shades called *off colors* have been successfully introduced, especially in Nigeria, and are litterally worn by some audacious women to "show off." A subtle combination of innovations and celebrations of the classic style has become the main way to emphasize the difference between European and African productions.

The Decline of Lomé Market

During the 1970s and 1980s, the spread of wax print production in various African countries did not affect the influence of the Togolese Nana Benz, who were at the peak of their operations at this time. Beside their knowledge and intuition in choosing the right designs and color-ways for customers from different countries, they also benefited from the unique situation of the port of Lomé, which was a tax-free zone.

The 1990s were a crucial turning point. Internal political problems in Togo led to a two-year-long strike at the port. In addition, in February 1994, the Banque de France decided to devaluate the CFA franc (the currency used in 14 countries of francophone Africa). From one day to another, the price of imported goods doubled. This situation resulted in dramatic, irreversible changes. And, finally, the head of VAC (Vlisco African Company) would subsequently decide to stop the Nana Benz's lifelong exclusivity contracts around the Vlisco designs. All these elements gradually impacted the influence of these Togolese women, some of whom had just passed their businesses on to their daughters. The second and the third generations would never manage to reach the same level of economic success. Instead of the prestigious nickname Nana Benz, they would now consider the term *Nanettes* more appropriate to describe themselves.

The changes in Togo have led to diversification in the wax print markets in various countries. In consequences, wholesale dealers developed businesses in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Cotonou (Benin), and Kinshasa (DRC). The Ivorian traders stopped traveling to Togo to get the new trends. They could stock their market stalls by buying the pieces of fabric from local Abidjanese wholesalers established in Rue du Commerce in the Plateau area or Adjamé market.

Lomé used to deal with a large number of Nigerian dealers, especially from the Igbo group. With about 100 million inhabitants in 1990 (and over 200 million in 2020), this Anglophone country has become the biggest reservoir of wax print customers. As legal imports of wax print were banned for years in order to preserve its local industry, the traders have used porous frontiers to supply the local markets. Benin is situated next to Nigeria, and has widely benefited from this geographical situation. Cotonou has become the new provider for the Nigerian market, its own local market, and those of other surrounding countries.

New Markets, New Names

The names of the designs can be a reliable way to follow these new roads of commerce. When Lomé was central to the trade in wax print, resellers from all over West and Central Africa were very keen to transmit back home the name given to patterns by the Nana Benz and therefore the early names of designs were the same in all the countries to which they were distributed. But when wax print started to arrive directly from Europe to different countries simultaneously, each wholesaler with exclusive rights to the designs was free to give them the name she wanted. This situation explains how some names can vary dramatically from one country to the other, as this diversity/plurality reflected various cultural perceptions of one graphical element. For example, a curly design is known as "little advice" in the Ivory Coast, "macaroni pasta" in Togo, and "something good has happened to me this year" in Ghana. A set of squares is called "Billionaire" in Togo, whereas Nigerian people call it "1,004 blocks," in reference to a jail. The design "woman of Lomé" has gained a political meaning in the Ivory Coast, as its new name "congress" refers to the PDCI (Democratic Party of the Ivory Coast).

Because the popularity of designs occurs in cycles, when a design is put back on the market, the previous name may no longer seem appropriate, and as a result a new, more relevant, name may be given to the pattern. An early design from Fleming figuring an Ashanti staff of kingship was initially called “Staff of Kingship.”

In the late 1960s, when the world saw the first rocket flying to the moon, the design was renamed “Apollo rocket.” Subsequently the undulated element of the pattern, which had been perceived for a time as the smoky ignition of a rocket, became a “corkscrew” in Abidjan in the 1990s.[12]

More recently, the names of famous politicians or characters from Brazilian TV soaps (which are broadcast in many West African countries) have also been associated with popular designs. “Z’ongles de Madame Thérèse,” for example, referred to the nails of the wife of the first president of the Ivory Coast, Félix Houphouët Boigny. A rumor circulated that he had an affair and that Madame Thérèse said that she would disfigure the mistress with her sharp nails. Wearing this particular wax print in the Ivory Coast has become a way to prevent other women from getting too close to the lover of the person wearing that print!

The Issues of the Global Consumer Society

In 2008, the election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States of America had an unsuspected echo in wax print naming. Up to seven Vlisco designs[13] were named after the president and his wife, although the patterns had absolutely no graphic connection to his election. Besides “the heart of Barack Obama” and “the tree of Barack Obama,” a handbag design evoking a French luxury brand became the bestseller “Michelle Obama’s handbag.” That was, of course, a great surprise for Vlisco, as the company was struggling at that period to create “new classics.”

The beginning of the twenty-first century has brought a lot of pressure on designers, as they constantly try to feel the transformations of African societies to reflect or translate them in their artistic work. Wax print customers are not only urban people—the harvest season in rural areas represent a major part of the sales—but this fabric is linked in many ways to the capital cities and what is happening there. For that reason, the wax print makers do not just wait for their wholesale customers to connect patterns with urban culture, but also tend to include key relevant elements in their designs. By the 1990s, mobile phones arrived on the market, although then they were owned only by a happy few. Not being affordable for most, they became very popular as motifs in wax print patterns and local fancy prints. People wore jumbo mobile phone patterns to express, by proxy, their deep desire to have a real one. By the 2020s, as smartphones became widely available, the motif became irrelevant and fell out of favor. This example illustrates the major changes in consumption habits in the African continent from the beginning of the twenty-first century. For decades, wax print was the major way to express wealth or aspirations. The fabric was usually acquired to be worn, but some were also hoarded as assets—Dutch wax prints having a constant growing value, and being safe and reasonable investments. But consumer society has created many other ways to show power and influence: big cars, nice housing, huge TV screens, smartphones, and other high-tech innovations. Therefore, the demand for valuable European wax prints in the African continent has gone down drastically. Looking at tailoring and the uses of the fabric can help us to understand these various changes through time and inform us about the new actors of wax print production.

From Fabric to Clothing

The way wax print is worn is closely linked to the context of its introduction on the continent. When the missionaries introduced the sewing machine, they developed a very particular style of clothing: the mission dress. The main purpose of this type of dress was to be decent, rather than elegant. The missionaries wanted to cover the body of the women, particularly their breasts. Therefore, the mission dress was very wide (and could be worn for a lifetime, encompassing bodily changes such as pregnancy or weight gain) and also very long, to cover the legs down to the ankles. This type of garment reflected religious principles, where nudity was usually linked to sin. It was also a very commercially oriented garment, as a single dress needed about four yards of (imported) textile. It did not specifically target the African markets, and was introduced to many parts of the world. In New Caledonia, it is known as *robe popinée* and it has become the "traditional" female costume to play cricket.

Mission Dress, Boubou, and Wrapper

When the mission dress was introduced by the end of the nineteenth century, there was obviously very little interest in the way the body was perceived in African cultures. Parts of the body uncovered by fabric were considered by missionaries to be naked, as they did not understand that a body can be covered with signs, culturally dressed with beads, painting, or scarification. As it is revealed in many early twentieth-century photographs, African women usually used the mission dress as an outer layer, under which they used to wear a traditional woven wrapper around the hips. The dress's conventional use reflected European domination.

An earlier African type of dress, called a *boubou*, developed in the north of West Africa, in the Sahelian areas, as fragments of cloth dating back to the eleventh century demonstrate. It has become the emblematic garment of the Muslim people, who introduced weaving to Africa. The original *boubous* were made out of woven strips stitched together to form a wide gown. Therefore, this garment was manufactured by assembling and sewing. In contrast, the manufacture of the mission dress involved cutting the fabric, which was a completely different approach to clothes making. The two garments do have some similarities, however; both are essentially one-size dresses, as they are very ample and not fitted to the body; and both were worn with a wrapped piece of fabric underneath, covering from the waist to the ankles. The wrapper was (and is still) a fundamental element of African clothing. It fits to the shape of the buttocks and hips and is readjusted regularly to ensure just the right amount of tightness in the fit.

The use of a second wrapped piece of fabric to symbolically mark the idea of respect in a variety of ways, marks a distinction between the *boubou* and the mission dress wearers. Muslim women would wrap a scarf (about half the length of the wrapper) around the head, whereas Christian women would wear a second wrapper in a greater variety of ways. During the second part of the twentieth century a syncretized new type of African garment has gradually emerged: the mission dress has been shortened into a top, usually called a *camisole* or *manière* in francophone areas. Its ample base became overlapped by a wrapper covering the legs from waist to ankles. The other wrapper was folded in half and usually wrapped around the hips. Alternatively, it might be worn over one shoulder as a stole. It had a symbolic function, marking the respectable status of married women and mothers. However, it could also be a useful accessory to be used in different ways: to carry a baby on the back, to wrap voluminous things and carry them on the head, or to spread on the floor as a mat to sit or lie on.

The development of this type of "three-piece suit" has influenced the marketing of wax print: it is not sold per metre, but by six-yard pieces, corresponding to a set of three pieces of two yards (1.80 m). In the francophone areas a two-yard piece is called a *pagne*. This word refers both to a specific measurement and to a special quality of fabric meant to be wrapped. *Tissu pagne* specifies that it can also be cut and sewn. The advantage of this three-piece suit is that it could be worn during an entire life from her wedding, regardless of a woman's physical changes. The quality of the Dutch Vlisco wax print was such that after being worn for 25 years it was usually still in perfect condition. Therefore, this long-lasting style of dressing seemed appropriate to the specific quality of wax print.

Another important detail in dressing was showing the original selvage: European brands, printed on the edge of the fabric, are usually ostentatiously displayed. Before 1994, the English company ABC labeled fabrics with only the name of the company and the provenance (Guaranteed English Wax ABC). It was not felt necessary to emphasize the brand with an identifiable logo until the devaluation of the CFA franc, when the company entered into fierce competition with the production from the Ivory Coast and Nigeria. From that period they began to print a rising sun logo associated with the initials ABC and, to target the francophone markets more accurately, one selvage was printed in French (Véritable wax anglais) and the other in English (Guaranteed English Wax). Obviously, wearers show the selvage of only high-quality products. When women wear wax counterfeit in fancy print they fold the fabric on the edge to hide the provenance, and also hem to thicken the fabric, as it is less hard-wearing than quality genuine wax print material.

It is remarkable to see how wax print has become a key element in a process of inventing tradition. The way formal African dressing was perceived around the end of the twentieth century was mainly linked to styles developed with this imported fabric. But, as it was considered the respectable way to dress, the complete female three-piece suit, made out of six yards of the same design, gradually became the style of mature old women. By the end of the 1980s, the attraction of Western clothing was challenging the use of wax print. The young generation was attracted by the tee-shirts and denim widely available on second-hand markets. The educated ladies working in the upper tertiary sector felt more comfortable wearing imported Western ready-to-wear, or imitations of these trends made to measure by their local tailor. Thus the demographic analysis of Africa, which predicted an increasingly youthful population with an explosion in the under-25 age group, was alarming for the wax print producers, who feared a progressive diminution of their market unless new uses for wax prints could be imagined.

The Rise of African Fashion Designers

During the 1980s, Chris Seydou was the emerging figure of African *haute couture*. Born in Mali as Seydou Dourou Noumbia, he had traveled to Paris to get work experience in the best French couture houses and chose to rename himself Chris in reference to Christian Dior, whom he greatly admired. He started to develop his own style by combining African handmade fabrics with Western cuts, daring to cut traditional handmade pieces of fabric that were, until then, only used wrapped. He thus modelled with magnificence *bogolan* (mud cloth, so-called because it was dyed with mud), damask *basin* and hand woven material such as *koba* and *badiel*. After his Parisian experience, which brought him great recognition, he moved to Abidjan, the capital city of the Ivory

Coast, where he quickly impressed the local tailors with the creative possibilities of fashion. The company Uniwax saw the potential of the situation, thinking that wax print could acquire a similar dynamism to that achieved by Chris Seydou in modernizing *bogolan* production in Mali. In 1987 Uniwax launched the Golden Scissors competition, targeting the tailors from Abidjan. The competition required them to use the wax print fabric in new ways, showing harmony, elegance, and creativity. The rules allowed the combination of different designs and materials, to contrast dramatically with the traditional use of six yards of the same design from head to toe.

The winner of the first Golden Scissors was Pathé'O, who had chosen to revisit the design called "the rare bird." Ten years after, another edition celebrated the talent of Gilles Touré, a student of Pathé'O, who had developed an innovative approach associating wax print and the spirit of feminine glamour. From the late 1980s some tailors would not only sew wide wax print *camisoles* and copy models from Western magazines, but also became fashion designers, creators of their own individual style. Each of them had a singular approach, but the general trend tends to reveal the shape of the body by creating more adjusted cuts and using a smaller quantity of fabric. One of the early types of garment that became very popular was the *maxi*: this long skirt became an elegant alternative to the wrapper. It can be flared at the bottom or straight with one or two vents, and is combined with a top that is fitted to the waist with a zipper or as a lace-up corset. This garment usually emphasizes the roundness of the shoulders and the generosity of the bust. Beside this endlessly revisited style, various types of dress of different length also came into fashion, while trousers were tentatively introduced into female wardrobes. The femininity and functionality of the clothes developed by fashion designers gradually seduced the younger generations and middle-class women.

A similar phenomenon has occurred in the male style of dressing. Although wax print became a particularly emblematic fabric among women, it was also worn by men in both traditional and modern styles. On the border of Gulf of Guinea, on the coastof West Africa, especially among the Akan group, a ceremonial style consists of wearing a four-yard-long wrapper like a toga, with one end of the fabric pulled over the left shoulder, on top of a tunic and short pants. This wrapping style developed with the use of a woven fabric usually called *kente*, and was transposed to the use of wax print. This was a style for dignitaries and traditional event attendants, and not one worn as an everyday casual style. In cities men tend to wear sober Western-style white or blue shirts. Until the early 1990s, indeed, it was totally inappropriate for a man to wear a shirt in wax print; for years, it was seen as a sign of poverty because it meant that you could not afford to buy plain fabric and had to rely on a spare piece of wax print. In Abidjan, however, Pathé'O managed to develop an innovative range of elegant long- and short-sleeved shirts made of wax print. They became a smart way to dress up during the weekend to go to parties, and over the years have become common in everyday formal clothing.

New Trends in Asian Prints

Gradually, thanks to the involvement of African fashion designers,[14] wax print fabric has become a ubiquitous element of men's and women's clothing, especially in the big cities, all over West and Central Africa. Wax print has also become a standard of Panafricanism, a fabric that serves to bind people. The fact that it did not originate in Africa is perhaps an aspect of its strength, as it is not traditionally specific to any particular tribe or social group. Besides that, although the missionaries contributed to its development, it is entirely secular, and can be used in any way, in contrast to traditional handmade sacred fabrics with very codified uses. Fashion design has developed all over Africa, from Dakar to Lagos, from Niamey to Kinshasa. Those who cannot afford the original garments from the fashion designers get a similar copy from their local tailor. The main consequences in terms of budget are that these new styles and trends encourage people to buy new clothes more often. Additionally, the fitted nature of these clothes means that they are not suitable to wear throughout a person's life, so more and more money is spent on tailoring. As most people's budgets are relatively fixed, savings were made in the quality of the fabric. Therefore, the rise of African fashion could have been a great opportunity for African factories producing cheaper prints than English and Dutch manufacturers; but, apart from Uniwax, companies did not seize this opportunity.

In fact, after the devaluation of the CFA franc, instead of modernizing their textile industry, which was over 30 years old, most African states preferred to export raw cotton, because the devaluation allowed them to earn twice as much in this way. In contrast, during that period Asian investors from China, India, and Pakistan developed their capacity to transform cotton and their printing industries to target new African markets. Consequently, the bulk of the African production was absolutely not competitive in either quality or prices when, in 2004, the WTO (World Trade Organization) ended quotas on textile imports. Asia took the opportunity to flood African markets with cheap fake wax that represented good value for money for most people. By 2020, therefore, 95 percent of so-called "wax" sold in Africa was not genuine wax print but counterfeits from Asia,[15] as the companies producing genuine wax print were struggling to compete. In England, ABC closed down in February 2021, as UNTL in Nigeria. GTP has stopped printing wax in Ghana to produce only basic prints. Nearly all the African fancy print companies have also ceased their activity due to Asian competition. In a very paradoxical situation, the wax print style has become particularly fashionable, as a symbol of a global bound, a fashionable item gathering people, at the very moment when wax print production is in decline. The young African generations, proud to celebrate their cultural heritage by wearing wax print designs on tops, head wrappers, or tote bags, are usually not conscious that by doing so they enrich those who contributed to the closure of the African industries.

Wax Print in the Western fashion

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed an extension of wax print popularity far beyond the African continent.[16] However, attracting European markets to this specific product was not easy. By the end of the 1980s, the British brand Marks & Spencer had unsuccessfully developed collections of shirts and trousers in ABC and Vlisco prints. The inherent irregularities of the print that were a proof of value in Africa were not considered suitable given the standardization of ready-to-wear products.

Two decades later, Black icons have become powerful influencers and Africa has a strong impact in artistic and creative fields. Luxury brands such as Burberry, Agnès B, Junya Watanabe, Victor & Rolf, Jean-Paul Gauthier, Comme des Garçons, and Stella McCartney have explored the fascinating exoticism of wax prints, and have chosen to work with the best quality: the Vlisco prints from Holland.

In 2019, Maria Grazia Chiuri, the artistic director of Maison Christian Dior, used wax print in a very innovative way, choosing to work with a company based in Africa. Her decision reflected a deep involvement, in that it initiated a project of cultural valorization. The Cruise collection of 2020 celebrated a conversation between the Christian Dior heritage of toile de jouy and the Ivoirian textile designers of Uniwax. This was a turning point, as the collection did not play on the idea of looking African but was, rather, willing to have an economic impact in Africa, by promoting a high-quality fabric locally made.

Wax print textiles are a complex and ambivalent aspect in the relationship between Europe and Africa since the end of the nineteenth century, and in also the growing influence of Asia, from where huge economic investments in Africa have come. More than a fabric, it has become a form of expression and a way to challenge formal codifications and reinvent the power of symbols.

By the twenty-first century, with its unique technique and a *savoir-faire* of exception possessed by only three companies in the entire world, wax print can give the opportunity to African companies to reverse history and seduce international markets with a responsible and traceable quality product in locally grown cotton. In a soft subversion, slowly but surely, Africa could target the European markets. What if Africa could dress Europe in the future and wax the world?

Notes

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5 Swedish Splendor Behind the Scenes

Hanne Eide

Very little is heard of the quiet Bobergh, but he smiled throughout the Second Empire – and with cause – returning at the end to a castle in his native land.[1]

It is usually said that it was Otto Gustav Bobergh's (1821–1882) artistic ambitions that made him leave Sweden for Paris sometime in the mid 1840s. However, before leaving, he had conducted studies in both art *and* economy, combined with a side job at his aunt's famous silk drapery store called *Medbergska* right at *Mynttorget* in the old town of Stockholm.[2]

The obscure history of Otto Gustav Bobergh, a paradigmatic "behind-the-scenes" figure in the early couture trade and his post Paris fashion adventures provided the starting point for this chapter. By zooming in on some of the larger shifts in Swedish fashion history from late nineteenth century to today, this chapter aims to connect recent advancement in Swedish fashion historiography with the development of the wider, transnational field of fashion research and contribute with a short glimpse of the modern fashion industry's long durée.

The Father of Couture Intermediaires

Upon Otto Bobergh's arrival to Paris and after a period with short-term contracts at various textile establishments around the city, Bobergh ended up as an apprentice at *Compagnie Lyonnaise* and then, finally got a stable post as *commis* at the renowned *Gagelin et Opigez* in rue de Richelieu[3] It is most probably here that he met his future business partner Charles Frédérick Worth for the first time. It goes without saying that the drapery trade happily welcomed the formation of a court and the early 1850s were busy times for these two gentlemen. At *Gagelin*, they also made the acquaintance with the *demoiselle de magasin* Marie Vernet, who holds the reputation for being the world's first real fashion model and who later became Charles Frédérick's wife.[4] C. F Worth had made it a habit to design dresses for Marie Vernet, later Worth, that she wore at work. These simple muslin dresses had gotten so well reputed that Worth suggested to his employers that they would set up a small dressmaking department. After some time witnessing an increasing demand for the dresses just "like Madame Worth's," C. F. Worth and Otto Bobergh decided to go into business together. In the fall of 1858, Worth and Bobergh set up a modest firm at number 7, *rue de la Paix* called *Maison Spéciale, Robes et Manteaux Confectionnés*.[5]

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No. 7, rue de la Paix

> *Within a week every woman in the circle in which it was introduced will have ordered a dress of a similar pattern. Within a month, women in less exalted walks of life will be wearing replicas of it.*[6]

The economic conditions of the Second Empire (1852–1871) seem to have constituted the perfect backdrop for the establishment of firms in the genre, and in the years to come Worth and Bobergh would enjoy an immense success at *rue de la Paix*. They had both experienced the impact and effect of different presentation techniques during their time at *Gagelin*, and would showcase a true "tour de force" in fashion marketing strategies.[7] Worth and Bobergh quickly formalized the practice of signing the creations by putting a label into the waistband of the dresses—like an artist—a practice that for long have credited them for founding the concept of the *modern designer* and for turning the previous model *Couture à Façon* upside down, at least symbolically.[8] And although the highly mythologized narrative of the firm has rightly been revised and nuanced in tandem with the last decades of advances in the writing of fashion history, some of the practices Worth and Bobergh did introduce—whether or not they were the first—have largely impacted the future of fashion history. Fashion historian Caroline Evans has claimed that the true genius of the firm, in fact, was the introduction of a standardized dress construction with interchangeable parts, that could easily be replaced and decorated in new, innovative manners, season after season, year after year.[9]

Worth and Bobergh also refined the concept with preproduced collections. And already as early as 1870s, the format with seasonal collections with a fixed number of model dresses sewn in the couture ateliers and later displayed in a fashion show format in the couture houses, seems to have been implemented in more or less the whole couture field.[10] And besides these exclusive events targeting the exclusive couture clientele, the houses also set up parallel shows for the international group of fashion buyers, who came to Paris on semi-annual basis to attend the big fashion openings. These important fashion agents, or intermediaries, came from all sorts of dressmaking studios and couture ateliers from all over Europe and North America, aiming to buy model dresses and the right to reproduce them in their home country.[11]

Together, Worth and Bobergh embodied global leadership in womenswear all the way until the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, when the imperial bubble burst. But for the couture house at no. 7 *Rue de la Paix,* this was indeed not the end, no matter the symbiotic relation with Napolen III's entourage and appetite for splendor. During the Third Republic, the firm would transform and experience an increasingly expansive phase, but this time without Bobergh. In 1871, the couture house re-opened as the house of Worth.[12]

Whilst Charles Frédérick Worth had taken the creative role in the company, Bobergh was indeed the more business oriented one of the two, mostly operating in the margins, behind the scenes. Otto Bobergh never staged creative crises, nor did he pose in a Rembrandt-like beret as did his business partner.[13] Nevertheless, his impact on the mangerial organization of the firm during the early years was of great importance to the forthcoming transformation of the French couture onto a global luxury trade. Several of the internal structural changes that took place in the couture trade towards a more standardized form of production and a proto-taylorist division of labor in the couture ateliers, as well as a progressive marketing apparatus, took place during his time in the firm.[14]

At his return to Sweden just before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, Bobergh settled in the central part of Stockholm, first in *Drottnninggatan* and soon thereafter at *Brunkebergs torg* no. 24. He had received 1.5 million francs when he dissolved his partnership with Worth, but kept linings in the firm and would continue to undertake annual trips to Paris for the rest of his life.[15] He continued to work with Worth, but now in the role of *commissionnaire*. For instance, in 1881 he ensured the order for the Worth creation that Crown Princess Viktoria wore when she made her entrance in Stockholm in 1881.[16]

The fashion climate in Stockholm in the early 1870s was somewhat "behind" the one in Paris. There were approximately sixty operating so-called *couturières* in the late 1860s and structurally they functioned according to the standard *couture à facon* format.[17] But one of them had a reputation for being the most prominent.

Augusta Lundin and the "French Method for Sewing"

Augusta Lundin was born in 1840 and grew up in the small town of *Kristianstad* in the southern part of Sweden. She came from a humble background, her mother being a maid and her father a tailor. Augusta was the eldest of seven, and was born two years before her parents married. The father would teach all four sisters how to sew in his workshop.[18]

Lundin arrived in Stockholm in the early 1860s and got a post at *Hellgrens*, a modist shop in *Mynttorget* where Lundin worked as a seamtress. A few years later, in 1867, and assisted by two of her sisters, she set up a small-scale dressmaking atelier of her own, on *Malmskillnadsgatan* 30. After just a couple of years, she made a first expansive move, with a small shop adjacent to her sewing atelier selling so-called *nouveautéer*, a Swedish version of the French word *nouveautés* which means ready-mades, in this case as in various types of accessories. Shortly thereafter, the firm initiates at least semi-annual buying trips to Paris and within a short period of time, Lundin's firm was reputed for being the most up to date and prominent couture atelier in the whole country, and Lundin was credited for having launched the so called *French method for sewing*.[19] Parallel to her Paris trips, the output in her little shop was somewhat reoriented, from novelties made up of Swedish producers and suppliers only, to a more varied mix of French silks, and laces from Belgium, Irland and Italy.[20]

Her business expanded gradually over the years. In 1881, Lundin installed herself in new premises at *Brukebergstorg* 2, in a neo-classically decorated space with tapestries, carpeted floors, antiques and verdant plants. All in all, a "charming contemporary salon" as a reporter from *Stockholms Dagblad* described it.[21] The couture customers entered on the ground floor and were then accompanied by a sales assistant all dressed in black into the big room where the choice of fabric was made. When the choice was made, the sales assistant brought her into the big Salon, where the collections were presented on young models.[22] Behind the Salons was the so-called *atelier system*, where the customers never were allowed to enter. This was where the various parts of the dresses were sewn in separate rooms. One for sleeves, one for bodices, and a third for skirts. This was the *French method for sewing*.[23]

At the height of her career, Lundin employed almost 200 people and she was the most prominent translator of Parisian chic to Sweden. Her business took up almost an entire building at Brunkebergs torg. In 1892, the weekly magazine *IDUN* reported from her anniversary:

> In the evening, the owner of the company had gathered together her large staff of assistants for a particularly beautiful event. When some 200 guests had gathered, the party began with a supper that was served at table. After supper, the guests moved out into the large hall, which had been decorated very tastefully with flags and greenery, where the presence of a curtain hinted that a special surprise had been prepared. When the curtain was drawn aside, an especially tastefully arranged tableau was displayed in the centre, in a beautiful group depicting art, industry, labour and trade.[24]

The French Salon at Nordiska Kompaniet

> *Great fashion is created in Paris, and from there it inspires and dictates the rest of the world. It is pure fact. No discussion needed.*[25]

Augusta Lundin had not been alone for sure, but her constantly expanding couture atelier at Brunkebergstorg had undoubtedly been the most prominent and prestigious intermediary of French couture to a Swedish fashion clientele in the late nineteenth century. But in the early years of the twentieth century, new players entered the field and, with time, the French Salon at the *Nordiska Kompaniet*, Stockholm's greatest department store, would slowly supercede her.

The story of the department store called *Nordiska Kompaniet* dates back to the early 1890s and a young man's (Joseph Sachs) dream of founding a Swedish equivalent to the large scale premium department stores like the ones on the continent. A world in miniature, a true Swedish Ladies' Paradis.[26] But the process to realize this goal took place gradually. A first step was taken in 1902 when two of Stockholm's largest retailers, Joseph Leja and K. M. Lundberg, merged their businesses. This early version of the *Nordiska Kompaniet* was perfectly located at *Stureplan* and within a short period of time, the so-called French Salon was established.[27]

In charge of the new French Salon, Joseph Sachs appointed Suzanne Pellin, a true *Parisienne* with plenty of working experience from the Parisian fashion trade and a background as a modist. Joseph Sachs had made her acquaintance sometime during the final years of the nineteenth century on one of his working trips to Paris and he had great trust in Pellin's fashion sensitivity.[28] Pellin, or Mme Suzanne, which became her nickname, directed the exquisitely decorated rooms of the French Salon on the second floor in the department store, as well as the ultra modern backstage sewing ateliers. In line with the other Stockholm couture ateliers from the period, the French Salon bought original couture models from the most renowned Parisian houses such as Worth, Paquin and Callot Sœurs and sold individually customized reproductions to a small, but exclusive couture customer base.[29] The French Salon also set up regular fashion shows where the couture models, that came in (so called) "mannequin size" were shown on living models. Mme Suzanne managed the French Salon at the *Nordiska Kompaniet* until 1913, when she decided to return to Paris. Once back in her native country, she made a career in the artificial flower trade and became partner in the well-known firm called *Natalie Bourseul*.[30]

Shortly after Mme Suzanne left Stockholm for new fashion adventures in Paris, *Nordiska Kompaniet* too made a fresh start. Joseph Sachs had conducted several field trips to America and had been especially impressed by Macy's in New York, Wanamaker's in

Philadelphia, and Marshall Field's in Chicago. But the department store that truly had amazed him was Jordan March in Boston, which he found to be "at the very top of modern organization and management."[31] In 1915, the *Nordiska Kompaniet*'s new top modern space in *Hamngatan* was inaugurated with the French Salon occupying a central position and decorated to mirror the Parisian Couture Salon prototype.[32]

Soon thereafter, a young man called Kurt Jacobsson was designated manager. Kurt had an impressive résumé, and was well connected in the textile trade, being the son of a famous Swedish textile manufacturer.[33] He had started his career as an apprentice under the supervison of Mme Suzanne at the French Salon and had gone with her on one of her regular buyers trips to Paris, stayed along, and finally ended up getting a post at the house of Lucile.[34] At the outbreak of the war, he returned to Stockholm to succeed Mme Suzanne. Kurt undertook semi-annual trips to Paris for the grand spring and fall couture openings. The regulations that surrounded the procedure of entering the shows were rigorous especially in the most prestigious fashion houses, but Kurt Jacobsson and *Nordiska Kompaniet* was an approved couture buyer.[35] In addition to original model dresses, he also purchased original fabric and various types of decorations.[36] Four weeks later, his selections of original couture models were presented to the Stockholm audience in a fashion show format in the French Salon.[37]

Kurt Jacobsson would gradually lead the French Salon at *Nordiska Kompaniet* into the 1920s with its new fashion ideal in total compliance with the developments in Paris. During this period, the fashion show format transformed from having been small-scale private events into more formalized and spectacular large-scale happenings, featuring notably in-house mannequins.[38] In the years to come, the French Salon at Nordiska Kompaniet would enjoy great success, and was renowned for providing excellent translation of Parisian chic.[39]

During wartime and the German occupation of Paris, the couture trade went on at a somewhat different pace and was threatened to relocate to Berlin.[40] Lack of fabrics, rationalization programs and the loss of influx of model dressed from Paris had forced many countries to go domestic both in terms of design and production. Sweden witnessed during this period a boom in textile manufacturing.[41] Although, in the case of Sweden, the "neutral" position in the war had facilitated the relations to Paris and throughout the war the Swedish fashion press continued reporting and expressed a faithfulness in the capital of fashion, and Swedish dressmakers continued to stage fashion shows.[42]

Kurt Jacobsson himself was back in Paris already in 1945 and managed to get a glimpse of the ongoing fashion exhibition *Théâtre de la Mode* at the Louvre.[43] At his return to Sweden, he predicted that a Parisian comeback would take place before long.[44]

In mid-October 1945, the touring miniature fashion exhibition set up by the most prominent Parisian couturiers came to Stockholm and was shown in the great hall at the *Nordiska Museum*.[45] The message was crystal clear: War was over and Paris was open for business. For almost two years, these doll-like fashion ambassadors visited cities all over Europe and then the United States.[46]

Kurt Jacobsson purchased ten orignal models (even if he thought the prices were outrageous!) at Dior's debut show in 1947 and is naturally credited for having introduced the so-called "New Look" to a Swedish audience.[47] Order had been restored. Paris was blossoming again, at least on the surface.

In tandem with the postwar price raise on couture, the ready-to-wear segment was constantly growing. The industrial production methods had improved considerably during the 1930s and 1940s.[48] The independent, craft-based Swedish couture ateliers that were trading in couture reproductions were in the postwar period gradually facing economic issues. But for Kurt Jacobsson at the French Salon, business went on pretty much as usual. He could count on *Nordiska Kompaniet's* financial assets to back him. In these years, the Swedish press treated Kurt Jacobsson like a superstar and his French Salon became from then on commonly referred to as Stockholm's Dior.[49]

A Global Couture Brand

For a very long time, Western couture houses had enjoyed a dominant position in the fashion hierarchy, but all of a sudden, style imitation in this way seemed outdated and unfashionable. In the postwar period the old couture system would progressively be challenged by the new demands of consumer culture.[50]

Before the war, the Parisian couture houses had guarded their cultural capital carefully, but as a consequence of the economic difficulties of the postwar realities, the new strategy was to reach out to more segments in order to survive.[51] The strict and rigid system of *La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne* that previously only had allowed buyers from very prestigious establishments that could reproduce "real" couture reproductions was now superseded by a new one and Dior, with economic support from the renowned French textile entrepreneur Boussac, was to become the paradigmatic example of the new business model for transnational couture.[52] This new way of doing fashion business was based on the idea of reproductions at various price points.[53] This was, in other words, a sort of wholesale couture that would have enormous impact on the Swedish fashion system during the 1950s and 1960s.

During the postwar era, all genres of the Swedish press collectively praised the genius of Dior to a point that one can talk of a genuine Dior fever.[54] In the late 1940s, the relation to Dior intensified and in the 1950s, *Nordiska Kompaniet* initiated a licensing agreement and set up a "Dior-model" department, selling an affordable, democratic mix between couture and ready-to-wear.[55] In 1957, Dior himself inaugurated the opening and the Swedish Daily Newpaper *Svenska Dagbladet* reported from the event.[56]

But Dior did not exclusively collaborate with *Nordiska Kompaniet*. Another crucial group of Dior intermediaries in this era, although with much less star quality and public visibility in comparison to Kurt Jacobsson at the French Salon, was the retail buyers.[57] Recent studies of the period have highlighted the fact that also local retailers and manufacturers worked with Parisian couture firms during this period which added to a general style breakthrough in the ready-to-wear segment. This shift is also noticeable in the Swedish fashion press and an increasing discourse on style and trends also in the domestic segment.[58]

In 1957, Grand Hôtel in Stockholm hosted an international collective fashion show as the result of a common initiative between the Swedish retail sector and the French textile sector, represented by Boussac. This event testifies to the persistent close, but updated link to the French fashion system and was an effort of great symbolic value, referred to in the press as "a happy marriage between French cotton fabrics and Swedish retail."[59] In many ways, it marks the coming of a new era for fashion business.

It would be proven right when Kurt Jacobsson predicted a new golden age for the Parisian haute couture trade on one of his semi-annual buying trips in the immediate postwar period.[60] Nevertheless, the revival with Paris alone on top was only temporary. At the French Salon at *Nordiska Kompaniet,* Kurt Jacobssonn was facing an increasingly paradoxical situation. He was doing everything he could to hold on to the old craft-based model, but seemed to be swimming upstream.[61] The extremely hierarchical haute couture model, with its roots in the luxury trade of the Ancien Régime suddenly appeared anachronistic. At the same time, the transitions that took place in the postwar couture industry, with its new business model based on licensing regimes, had made its clear, concrete mark on the Swedish fashion landscape. Rapid, trendy style shifts appeared to be coming from everywhere and at a much higher speed.

On July 9th, 1966, the French Salon at *Nordiska Kompaniet* closed its Dior inspired pearl gray doors permanently.[62] At this time, craft-based, customized couture had been rendered unprofitable and out of touch with contemporary consumer desire. Having lived in style symbiosis with the French model for fashion for more than 100 years, this marked the end of an era.

From Paris to Västerås—A Postfordist Fashion Pioneer

On September 13th, 1947, Erling Persson opened his 50 square meters retail shop, strategically located in the main street of the small town of Västerås.[63] He called it *Hennes* (Her's), a direct address to his female customers as the one leading the way forward.[64] In this way, Persson can be said to have operated in something like a modern fashion business historical tradition, where notions of femininity for long have been heavily used as a marketing tool, *La Parisienne* being the most famous example.[65] Persson's concept was an immediate success and during the following years, he opened new stores in several Swedish cities. In the late 1950s, he inagurated a big flagship store in central Stockholm.

The up-to-dateness and trend sensitivity as well as the production capacity in the ready-to-wear sector had improved considerably in Sweden during the postwar period.[66] But, in Persson's view, local production costs were too high and moreover, the domestic manufacturers's lead times were too long, thereby constituting a great risk to his business model.[67]

American fashion had flourished in the 1930s and 1940s and especially during wartime, the relative lack of influx of Parisian models had paved the way for the development of local design talent.[68] Paired with more effective and flexible production methods and a boom in new, man-made materials, the concept of "democratic fashion" or "style for everyone" arguably materialized in the streets and made itself both felt and seen.[69] When Persson visited the United States in the late 1940s, he found that the retail sector there was much ahead of its time in its ability to offer low-priced, fashionable goods with rapid turnover. In New York, Persson had especially admired Lerner Shops.[70]

To realize his democratic style imperative "fashion for everyone," Persson kept looking for more flexible production solutions. In line with the developments in other western economies, as well as of other Swedish retailers, from the 1960s and onwards, Persson started to look offshore in the search for cheaper sources of textiles and garments. Between 1960 and 1980, the Swedish retail sector was in decline as a result of increased import from low-wage countries. The concept with big volumes and rapid style changes made the textile manufacturers production process seem outdated, static and impossible to keep. As a consequence of the production relocation, Swedish textile manufacturing centers like the small town of Borås that at the time employed around 70,000 people gradually shut down. Symptomatic for the period was also that the Swedish state gave up on local production.[71]

Risking Nothing at All

Flexible specialization had always been a core feature of the modern fashion system.[72] Already in Augusta Lundin's late-nineteenth-century couture atelier, the seamstresses had to adapt to the seemingly "organic" fashion seasons and the busy versus slow working periods.[73] At that time, the fashion calendar was mainly based on the society women's ball schedule. But the accelerating speed and the constant style changes of the silhouette throughout the nineteenth century presented an increasing risk to fashion entrepreneurs.[74] Persson was not only a pioneer in flexible production solutions, he mastered the fluctuating demand in multiple ways. In the 1960s, he kept his staff moving with a high percentage of part-time contractors and an ample reserve of workforce for the most busy times.[75]

The sensitivity to trends and fashion that Mamsell Lundin, Mme Susanne, and later Kurt Jacobsson had excelled in their times would in the 1960s become more formalized.[76] Trend forecasting was not only a feature of the modern fashion system though, but had developed gradually ever since the very inception of the textile industry. Early on, tradespeople had understood the importance of making rational predictions on future consumer desire to succeed in business. Making the wrong choice in color for example, could potentially become an economic disaster. Therefore, the industry had come up with various forecasting devices such as color cards and sample books that became indispensable tools that have developed ever since.[77] The sixties, in sync with the breakthrough of to a greater extent global fashion landscape, saw the birth of proper trend forecasting agencies that became an increasingly important actor in the fashion system and created a web of interlinked activities around the globe.[78] For Persson, trend forecasting services were a crucial part of the business practice.[79]

Another crucial but indispensable fashion intermediary for the business was the retail store buyer. Persson understood early the important role of the buyer and invested in a big buyers department. The buyers worked in small groups and were organized according to different budgetary systems. Each group of products were carefully monitored and compiled and the system gave constant updates on what was selling and not. Furthermore, Persson would early on make a great investment in visual merchandisers and coordinated new store openings.[80] This early control mechanism through the collection of data helped the company to predict the future style desires of the consumer and worked simultaneously as a rational tool to illiminate waste and avoiding big stocks.[81] It would also have a long term effect in how the company organized its production.

Towards the end of the 1960s, there were 38 H&M stores in Sweden and a couple of stores in Norway and Denmark.[82] Relocation of production, high volume, low prices and rapid style changes had proven to be a winning concept. Erling Persson's H&M was the most successful retail company in Sweden and an international precursor in the massification of fashion. In 1974, Persson's H&M made its initial stock launch and in the early 1980s, Erling Persson stepped down and passed the baton to his son, Stefan Persson, who realized the company's transformation into a global mass-market fashion brand.[83]

The new millenia began with an unprecedented growth in the fast fashion sector. Symptomatically, in 2004, H&M opened its thousandth store.[84] A post-fordist impulse has characterized H&M since the inception and Stefan Persson as well as his successor and son, Karl-Johan Persson have proved to be crucial transnational intermediaries for the continuing success of the paradigm. In the new millenia, the company has deepened its predictive imperative and developed new strategies to cater to new, increasingly individualized consumer groups and has, in many ways, become a forerunner in the field of diversity and identity political communication content.[85] In 2020, former sustainability manager, Helena Helmersson, was elected CEO, which can be seen as an at once bold and valuable choice. A few years earlier, in a conference, she received the cheers of the audience when she stood up and with clenched fist roared: "The wage conditions for the workers must be fair."[86]

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a short and compressed historiography of the evolution of the Swedish fashion field from the late nineteenth century until today. The overall aim with the chapter has been to cast some light on the transnational nature of this history, and thus point to the importance in avoiding methodological nationalism. The chapter describes how some important conceptual changes that took place in the heart of the industry in late-nineteenth-century Paris migrated and effected the inner workings of fashion business at large. Furthermore, the chapter shows how, in the postwar era, the perific Swedish retailer H&M became a forerunner and a great player for the new global, democratic fast fashion paradigm.

Notes

1 Saunders, *Age of Worth*, 77.
2 For Bobergh bio see Lewenhaupt, "Svensk modehistoria..", 45.
3 Lewenhaupt, "Augusta Lundin, kvinnan bakom Sveriges första modehus", 7–35.
4 Evans, *Mechanical Smile*, 14.
5 Numerous studies have examined the early development of the House of Worth. See, for example, de Marly, *History of Haute Couture*. Saunders, *Age of Worth*. Coleman, *The Opulent Era*.
6 Worth, A Century of Fash.., 151.
7 Evans, *Mechanical Smile*,14. Pouillard, *Paris to New York*, 11.
8 See, for example, Troy, *Modern Art and Fashi..*, Tétard-Vittu, *Au Paradis des Dame*s, Breward, *Fashion*.
9 Evans, *Mechanical Smile*, 14.
10 Eide, "Transnationella utbytet..", 51.
11 For a nuanced account of this development see Evans, *Mechanichal Smile*.
12 Lewenhaupt, "Svensk modehistoria..", 45.
13 On Worth's artistic persona see for example, de Marly, *History of Haute Couture*. Saunders, *Age of Worth*. Coleman, *The Opulent Era*, Breward, *Fashion*.
14 For an overview of the commercial nature of the early couture firms see for example Palmer, *Couture and Commerce*, Grumbach, *Histories de la mode*, Evans, *Mechanichal Smile*, Pouillard, *Paris to New York*.
15 Lewenhaupt,"Augusta Lundin..", 21.
16 Eide,"Fragment från couturens..", 44.
17 Lewenhaupt, "Augusta Lundin". On the shift from Couture à Facon to Haute Couture see for example Coleman, *Opulent Era*, 33.
18 Lewenhaupt,"Augusta Lundin".
19 The so called "French Method" for sewing implied a rational production system in the sewing ateliers. For a nuanced account see Evans, *Mechanical Smile*, 144.
20 Lewenhaupt,"Augusta Lundin..", 22.
21 Eide,"Fragment från couturens..", 44.
22 Ibid.
23 For a nuanced account see Evans, *Mechanichal Smile*, 144.
24 IDUN, April, 1892.

25 Westerberg,"Modekrönika". The original reads:"Att det är i Paris det stora modet skapas och att det därifrån inspirerar och dirigerar övriga världen är ett faktum som aldrig behöver diskuteras."
26 For an extensive account on the history of Nordiska Kompaniet see for example Husz, *Drömmars*, Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*, Strömquist, *Nordens*.
27 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 12, Eide,"Modekultur", 17.
28 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 12.
29 For more extensive account of the French Salon at Nordiska Kompaniet see for example Strömquist, *Nordens*, Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*.
30 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 32.
31 Strömquist, *Nordens,* 13.
32 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 48. For a more extensive account on the style history of the couture salon see for example Evans, *Mechanichal Smile,* Skillen, *Dior*, Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*.
33 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 54.
34 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 51.
35 For more in depth accounts on the organization and regulations surrounding the couture trade during the period see for example Grumbach, *Histories*.., Palmer, *Couture*.., Evans, *Mechanichal*.., Pouillard, *From Paris…*
36 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 74.
37 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 74, Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*, 147.
38 For more details on the evolution of the fashion show format and the introduction of in-house models at NK, see Strömquist, *Nordens* and for an overview of the history of the fashion show see Evans, *Mechanical*.
39 For detailed account of the Swedish press as an important couture intermediaire in the interwar period see Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*.
40 Pouillard, "Reinventing Paris", 35. For a detailed account of the couture trade during wartime see Veillon, *Fashion*.
41 For this development see for example Gråbacke, *Kläder*.
42 Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*, 149. According to Kyaga, the wartime situation for the couture trade differed less in Sweden compared to other countries where a more patriotic and domestic development took place. See for example Arnold, *American*. Sweden remained style wise faithful to the Parisian model.
43 Pouillard, *From Paris*, 167.
44 Strömquist, *Nordens*, Kyaga, "*Couturens*".
45 See exhibition catalogue Théâtre de la Mode, Fransk stil och smak (Stockholm: Victor Pettersons Bokindutri, 1945).
46 Kawamura,The Japanses Revolution.., 47, Kyaga,"Couturens".
47 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 38.
48 Gråbacke, *Kläder* and Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*.
49 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 144.
50 Pouillard, "Recasting Paris," 36.
51 Pouillard, "Recasting Paris," 37.
52 Pouillard, "Recasting Paris," 38. For detailed account on this evolution see Palmer, *Couture…*
53 Pouillard, "Recasting Paris," 41.
54 On the importance of Dior in postwar Swedish fashion discourse see Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*. For detailed account on Dior's importance as postwar international cultural phenomena see Palmer, *Dior*..).
55 Strömquist, *Nordens,* 146.
56 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 147.
57 On the Swedish retail buyer see Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*. More on Swedish couture atelier that imported models from Dior see Carlgren, *Birgittaskolorna*.
58 Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*, 134.
59 For detailed overview of this event see Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*, 163.
60 On the Golden Age of Haute Couture see Wilcox, *Golden Age*.
61 Srömquist, *Nordens*, 196.
62 Strömquist, *Nordens*, 201. On Dior's interior design see Skillen, *Dior without*.
63 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 13.

64 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 13. In the late 60 s', Mauritz is added to the name, hence H&M.
65 For a detailed account of how notions of femininity for long have been heavily used as marketing tools by the fashion industry see Rocamora, *Fashioning the City*. See also Pouillard, "*From Paris to*.", 23.
66 Kyaga, *Swedish Fashion*.
67 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 14.
68 For a nuanced account of this development see Arnold, *American Look* …
69 See Green, *Ready-To-Wear* on flexible production in the fashion industry and Blaszczyk and Pouillard, "*Fashion as enterprise*", 1, on the complex postwar material development in the fashion industry and on building consumer trust in man-made materials.
70 Giertz, Mårtensson," *Swedish entrepreneurial culture*," 204.
71 Giertz, Mårtensson," *Swedish entrepreneurial culture*," 20. For a nuanced account of this development see Gråbacke, *Kläder, Shooping*…
72 See in particular Green, *Ready-to-Wear*.
73 For the seeminlgy organic structure of the early couture system with a well developped system with subcontractors and homeworkers see for example Evans, *Mechanichal*.., Green, *Ready-to Wear*.
74 Blaszczyk and Pouillard, "*Fashion as enterprise*", 10.
75 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 176.
76 Pouillard, *From Paris*.., 192
77 For an historical overview and the development of forecasting in the fashion industry see Blaszczyk, *Color Revolution*, Blaszczyk and Wubs, edited by *The Fashion Forecasters*. For a nuanced account of the prediction imperative in modern business practices see Zuboff, *Surveillance Capitalism*.
78 Pouillard, *From Paris*.., 192.
79 Giertz, Mårtensson, "Fashion for Everyone," 215 has interestingly noted that the original business concept for Persson was not to create fashion, but rather to take inspiration from current trends.
80 Giertz, Mårtensson, "Looking Behind," 213–235.
81 Big stock naturally became a huge probelm for the fashion entrepreneurrs since rapid style change made the goods unfashionable very quickly. For more details on the development of H&M's waste illiminating practices and post fordist spirit, See Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*.
82 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 17.
83 Pouillard, *From Paris,* 185. For a nuanced account on H&M's transition into becoming a global brand see Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*.
84 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 62.
85 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYCoVfEW9gU (2022-08-14).
86 Palm and Alsgren, *Boss*, 115 The original reads: "Arbetarna borde få en lön som är tillräcklig för att leva på."

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6 Mending and Repairing

Anna König

Introduction

Running parallel to established histories of dress and clothing, the subject of mending and repair is relatively unexplored. Though periodically deemed culturally significant, largely it has been ignored, either too insignificant to bother with, or squeezed to the margins and footnotes of research. But an investigation into the history of garment repair and maintenance reveals a fascinating discourse that can be utilized to understand and critique the development of industrialized fashion production from the 1800s to the present day.

That the subject is present in this anthology is noteworthy, reflecting a subtle yet significant shift in the way that the cultural history of fashion is conceptualized. As the study of historical fashion has generally been preoccupied with the clothing of wealthy, white cultures, little attention has been paid to the unglamorous work of mending, and a fixation with the concept of "the new" is as prevalent in fashion studies as it is within the fashion industry itself. Though it has been observed that "mending is currently at the outer extreme of the fashion system,"[1] the intention here is to draw it into more mainstream discourses.

With the increased industrialization of textile and clothing production over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is sometimes assumed that mending is something that no longer happens. However, alongside this dominant narrative, it has continued to have a presence, for as Gibson and Stanes point out: "practices of mending clothes (and thus extending their life cycles) vary enormously through time, from place to place, and among demographic groups."[2] Accordingly, it is argued here that repair culture cannot be understood as a single historical thread: throughout history there have been varied motivations for mending, and numerous ways of understanding these practices, whether considering historical or contemporary manifestations. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is not only to map out key moments in mending and repair activities between 1800 and the present day, but to also consider the value of those practices and their relevance to the fashion system of the twenty-first century.

Finding Evidence of Mending

As indicated above, the subject of repair does not typically sit within *fashion* studies. Instead, it is often more fruitful to look for research on *clothing*, or amongst historical writings on social want and poverty. This may sound like a minor semantic detail, but this shift in classification from "fashion" to "clothing" is significant, not least when

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searching for relevant sources. When my initial research into the subject began,[3] scholarly sources were difficult to identify, but today mending can be found in a variety of academic and cultural contexts.

That said, it still tends to reside predominantly within historical studies relating to clothing and textiles. This includes Gordon's work on New England women in the nineteenth century,[4] and Campbell and Brandt's[5] examination of clothing consumption on the American frontier during the same period. Social class is often an important factor in establishing where examples of mending might be found. In this respect, the work of Vivienne Richmond,[6] is useful as the focus on non-elite clothing means that mended clothing punctuates her study of nineteenth-century dress, underlining an enduring link between poverty and mending. It should also be noted, however, that in each of these studies, mending is never much more than a small detail in the research.

Yet actual historical records of everyday mending are paradoxically hard to come by, probably because of the mundane nature of the work. Unlike studies into millworkers or dressmakers, the "workforce" even for a specific time and geographical location it is not a single, consolidated industry: rather, it is a fragmented collection of small, domestic activities. There is also the issue of who was carrying out that work. In the nineteenth century, middle-class households would have had servants to carry out such work, and though the acquisition of new fabrics for dressmaking might be recorded either in household records or personal diaries, specific repairs carried out by staff tend not to be documented. Though we know that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many women would have made a living by laundering and mending clothing, detailed accounts of precisely what was being mended don't exist within the public domain. This changes somewhat for the period between 1937 and the early 1950s as the UK Mass Observation Archive contains examples of precisely this kind of quotidian detail, recorded by people of all social classes in the form of diaries, surveys and specialist industry reports.[7]

Another way of understanding practices of clothing repair is to position it on a continuum of activities associated with apparel that ranges from rag-sorting and laundry, to darning or patching, to garment alteration and adaptation, to full-blown deconstruction and re-making of garments. It is therefore useful to look at literature on domestic sewing and garment-making more generally to find information relating to mending: for someone who could make a whole garment, the mending of a seam or darn is a small task. Susan Strasser highlights this centrality of sewing knowledge to mending:

> Because they sewed, they intimately understood the fabric and cut of old clothing – mending, accumulating pieces that could be used again, and composing new garments from old ones.[8]

By contrast, in the contemporary world making one's own clothes—whether sewn or knitted—is a niche domestic activity, seen as a specialist hobby rather than a routine domestic task.

Clothing repair is often also implicit within examples of the circulation of secondhand clothing, so it makes sense to look for evidence of it in those locations. Similarly, mending and repair services i.e., those outside of the domestic sphere, have existed over the past 200 years, but they tend to be small, local, and invariably informal, so they can be difficult to quantify or find within records. Often attached to laundry and dry-cleaning services, an examination of such services probably warrants separate investigation.

With regards to the geographical reach of this chapter, most examples and sources are drawn from the UK, Europe, and North America, although practices of mending in Japan, Ghana, and Australia are also discussed. To a certain extent, this reflects the tendency of scholarly work to focus on the history of clothing in the anglophone world, but attempts are made wherever possible to look beyond this.

Although a variety of primary source material is utilized here, regrettably, there is limited discussion of specific historical mended garments as the very nature of repaired clothing means that it is unlikely to have been kept in either museum archives or family collections. Yet with regard to contemporary mending, the picture is very different, and this is where social media serves as a collective archive. While evidence of historical repairs may now be long-gone, enthusiastic documenting and discussion of contemporary mending provides a rich source of examples as well as commentary from active menders such as Celia Pym,[9] Katrina Rodabaugh,[10] and Tom van Deijnen.[11]

The Stigma of Repaired Clothing

Lacking the status of brand-new clothing, mended garments are not merely neutral. Instead, through repair, garments take on a stigmatized identity. In Western cultures particularly, such items can become symbols of want, indicative of a lack of material resources and economic failure within a system of growth and progress. The act of repairing a worn or damaged item runs counter to the message of buoyant optimism contained within consumer culture, and the object itself becomes implicated. Thus, it is easy to see how an item of apparel that has been repaired might become imbued with negative associations: who would want their material want to be on show? Mended clothing also speaks of the body; of its movement, its functions. The wear and tear of everyday life become evident through repaired clothing. Karen Sayer explores this connection in the context of nineteenth-century society, noting that: "the body that could be glimpsed through disordered/frayed/ragged clothing came to be automatically treated as fluid, sexualized, dangerously unconfined."[12] Through this transmission of values to garments, damaged clothing itself becomes problematic, even dangerous.

Despite having been established hundreds of years ago, the associations that Sayer discusses have proved hard to shake off and the social stigma of repaired clothing persists because societies continue to be socially unequal. There have always been people who cannot afford brand new clothing, and therefore there has always been repaired clothing. This understanding of mending as a stigmatized activity might help explain the resistance there has been in the past to studying it, as well as the "hiddenness" of the practice. Furthermore, it sheds light on the way that contemporary manifestations of mending are often framed as anarchic, countercultural, and even politically radical, an idea that is further explored in the latter section of this chapter.

Mending in the Nineteenth Century

Prior to industrialization, knowledge of fabrics and textiles was regarded as a valuable component of the domestic economy. Writing with reference to the secondhand clothes trade between 1600 and 1850, Lemire notes that: "a basic knowledge of textiles and their qualities was commonplace within the wider public, especially among women who took care of these items in the home."[13] She subsequently writes that historically, the items most frequently taken to pawnbrokers were garments or household linens, and that the transactions that took place functioned as an "alternative currency system."[14] Clothing and household textiles were evidently seen as durable items that were worth caring for and maintaining, not least because of their potential exchange value. Even as the nineteenth century progressed and processes of industrialization facilitated the emergence of mass-produced goods, "the high costs of fabric meant that clothing had a much longer lifespan than we now understand."[15] Therefore, mending continued to be a part of daily life as clothing was not regarded as disposable; garments were constructed using materials and methods that made their repair viable. Moreover, domestic life in the nineteenth century was full of minor hazards, as Strasser points out: "Mending was frequently necessary for people who lived in houses heated by fireplaces and stoves and lit by candles and oil lamps."[16] Thus, we can understand mending at that time as being an accepted and integral part of the life cycle of clothing rather than an occasional unexpected household activity.

The everyday nature and importance of clothing repair is reflected in de Dillmont's *Encyclopedia of Needlework* first published in 1886.[17] This text has come to be regarded as canonical by scholars of textile history generally, particularly those with an interest in stitch as it comprehensively draws together a wide range of sewing techniques, "with the hope that diligent female workers of all ages may be able by its means to instruct themselves in every branch of plain and fancy needlework."[18] While she herself was an expert in embroidery, drawing on techniques of stitchwork from across the globe within her writing, it is significant that mending was deemed to be a set of skills of great enough importance to feature in her encyclopedia.

She stresses that: "How best to disguise and repair the wear and tear of use or accident is quite as valuable an art as that of making things new."[19] The four different types of darning outlined by de Dillmont indicate the expected level of knowledge of fabric construction and guidance on the creation of different types of patches is also given. For instance, two different techniques are given for darning linen (working on the warp and woof threads, or alternatively, working diagonally. These are time-consuming procedures that require close attention to the weave of the cloth and small, neat stitches, all to be carried out on the reverse side of the fabric being mended. Likewise, instructions are given on repairing damask fabrics (which have a more complex weave), and thus we see there is an expectation of an intricate working knowledge of fabric types. However, even de Dillmont recognizes the painstaking nature of this work, describing fine drawing—where "invisible" darns are made in cloth—as "a tedious process and one which, though easy enough to understand, requires great care in the execution."[20] Even patching is explained as a complex set of procedures involving the fitting of suitable fabric into position, with the emphasis—all the while—on creating as invisible a repair as possible. An example of this attention to detail is the advice to use a lighter fabric when mending a garment that is not new, so as to match the worn quality of the fabric exactly.[21]

Huge changes to the structure and organization of society occurred in the nineteenth century, and concurrently, there were shifts in welfare provision. Therefore, it is in research about this period that we see most clearly how mended clothing became stigmatized, laden with moral and social meaning. What had once been implicit became explicit as the working classes were categorized, ostensibly to facilitate provision of welfare through various civic channels. But as Sayer observes these judgments were loaded with subjectivity: "The ragged garments of the indigent carried a different set of connotations to those of the neatly patched, clean clothes of the poor-but-honest labourer."[22] As the fashion system expanded through the nineteenth century, it became a more potent and nuanced indicator of social status as "style, material, cleanliness, and signs of wear communicated important information about who the wearer was, and to which social group they belonged, or aspired to belong."[23] With reference to North America, Strasser notes that: "slaves, poor people, and westerners on the frontier wore clothing that was patched over and over,"[24] (1999: 41) establishing an association between repaired clothing and low socioeconomic status that has left a significant legacy.

It was during the nineteenth century that instructive texts and domestic manuals became popular. This, alongside the development of civic institutions, made what had been implicit explicit, and they "clearly drew on the dominant moral, economic and scientific languages of their day."[25] Sayer goes on to point out that worn and repaired clothing subsequently became symbols not merely of social position, but of perceived moral status:

> Frayed seams / the disarray / the absence of dress suggested transgression and a failure of the boundary of culture / nature, a boundary that was meant to exist between human and animal, civilized and savage.[26]

The burden of responsibility involved in mending can therefore be understood as far larger than might initially be imagined. In her work on dress and clothing in Australia in the mid-nineteenth century, Lorinda Kramer explores the ways in which clothing maintenance and appearance generally dovetailed with etiquette conventions. She notes that "good care ensured neat presentation, and confirmed standards of modesty and economy"[27] (Cramer, 2017: 58). This provides insight into what was regarded as socially important within a society where members of a new immigrant population were jostling for social position.

The visible good care of clothing may have been one way of establishing social position, but simultaneously, social class would determine the type of sewing you would be taught. At a time when education for the masses had become formalized in the United Kingdom, sewing was an essential part of the curriculum for girls. However, in 1876, the English Education Department stated that "darning mending, marking, and knitting" might be taught at school, but "no fancy work."[28] There was also a preoccupation with ensuring that working class women did not lose their domestic sewing skills once they entered the industrialized workplace. Clubs and classes were set up to maintain these skills, and Richmond notes that "the labouring woman who could not make basic garments and mend her family's clothing was perceived as inadequate by both rich and poor"[29] (2013: 96). Indeed, the feminine ideal in the nineteenth century, as represented in visual and literary forms, was that of an industrious, domestic woman. Work by Barker and Hamlett considers mending within the context of living arrangements and familial relations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[30] They note that it was seen as an incredibly private practice, requiring the same kind of segregation of the sexes within the home as washing. Thus, it might be concluded that mending tended to be contextualized a resolutely female and domestic, and the full weight of this responsibility is articulated by de Dillmont: "The mending of wearing apparel and house-linen, though often an ungrateful task is yet a very necessary one, to which every female hand ought to be carefully trained."[31]

However, it would be wrong to surmise that it was *only* women who repaired clothing, for Richmond writes that "many boys and men, not only professional tailors, also learned to sew and knit."[32] In particular, she notes that the absence of women on ships meant that sailors had to sew and that "Sunday afternoons were frequently devoted to 'make and mend'."[33] Evidently, under certain circumstances, sewing was acceptable for males: either when they were children, or when living in largely all-male communities, but "in other circumstances it could be perceived as emasculating,"[34] a possible exception being when a sewing machine was used, the mechanized device acting as a buffer and somehow altering the social perception of the activity. However, it is imperative to clarify that the gendered construction of sewing activities refers in this instance to those which were carried out in a *domestic* setting. Men who worked as tailors or furriers would have had extensive knowledge of stitch and clothing construction techniques within their professional contexts: whether or not they used them at home on their own clothing is unknown.

Whilst "fancy work" and embroidery formed a cornerstone of middle-class feminine identity,[35] mending has a less clear role for this social group. In wealthier households, women would not have carried out such work themselves: a maid would have done that as part of their routine household duties. We know that "workboxes" were a common feature of the nineteenth century middle-class home,[36] but did those workboxes contain more than embroidery silks? An insight into this comes from the American Christine Terhune Herrick, best known for her domestic instruction writings from the nineteenth century. She indicates that a vast array of materials and equipment was required in a work basket, including a variety of threads of different colors and thicknesses, suitable for working on different types of material; buttons of various types and size; small pieces of fabric for mending; as well as sundry specialist tools such as buttonhole scissors, thimbles, hooks, and eyes and so on.[37] Yet alongside this cultural imperative to mend, there was also some resistance to needlework: "Needle-work and intellectual improvement are naturally in a state of warfare," writes Mary Lamb (as Sepronia), in *The British Lady's Magazine* 1815.[38] As this quote suggests, for some, the domestic work of sewing was perceived to be a hindrance in the education of girls.

Regardless of class, household mending at this time was perceived to be an activity for which women should take responsibility. Though it might be assumed that rapid industrial progress would somehow lessen the burden of this task, the replacement of linen and wool with less robust cotton fabrics, and "new standards of cleanliness" meant that women in the nineteenth century would spend more of their time stitching than ever before.[39] Additionally, the growth in popularity of domestic manuals during the nineteenth century ensured that tasks which in previous centuries would have been learnt and passed on verbally, and through the repetition of the activity itself now became enshrined as documents of social and moral truth.

Sewing Manuals, Thriftiness, and Invisible Repairs: Mending in the Early Twentieth Century

The turn of the twentieth century brought about many social changes, yet domestic mending remained a part of daily household life. In her discussion of representations of sewing in Edwardian England, Barbara Burman highlights the way that needlework was positioned as emphatically feminine and often collective in nature: "Their sewing was depicted as soothing in times of crisis and as an occupation combining thrift, domesticity and sociability."[40] While this offers an upbeat social construction of sewing work, another source indicates the sheer amount of time that mending occupied. With reference to a study of the daily chores of housewives in the London Borough of Lambeth as documented by Maud Pember Reeves,[41] Richmond notes that: "all spent some part of the day sewing, principally an hour or more in the evening mending, especially their husbands' clothes."[42] Day Surveys of the Mass Observation project also provide tangible examples: "I put aside the most dilapidated clothes for the old clothes basket, and return the rest tidily, noticing that most want mending somewhere or other" (Day Survey respondent 006, September 12, 1937). This particular respondent was a young unmarried woman, Muriel Barker, living in Stepney, East London, which was at that time a fairly deprived area. Yet mending was part of daily life for better off women, too, for Respondent 135 was a Publishers Clerk living in the comparatively smart area of Chelsea:

> I go into my room and turn on the radio, but it is all talks and highbrow music so I play some jazz on my gramophone. I sit and smoke and then do a spot of mending and a few odd jobs in the tidying up line. (Day Survey respondent 135, May 1937–Sept. 1937)

These tiny snippets of information provide a useful glimpse into how actual lives were lived, particularly as they are in the respondents' own words.

Sewing manuals of this time period also offer insights into repair-related activities. One of those considered here is an American publication, *The Dressmaker*, published in 1911 by The Butterick Publishing Company. The title page reads: "A Complete Book on all matters connected with Sewing and Dressmaking from the simplest stitches to the cutting, making, altering, mending and caring for the clothes."[43] It is worth noting not only the presence of mending on the title page, but that the chapter entitled "Darning and Mending" is the third in the book, a prominent position in a manual that covers all aspects of home-produced clothing.

A second manual examined here is *The Art of Needlecraft*.[44] First published in Britain in 1935, it is a 640-page volume written by sisters Ruby Kathleen Polkinghorne and Mabel Irene Rutherford Polkinghorne, both teachers, responsible for a number of instructional titles. Covering every form of handicrafts from plain sewing to upholstery, of the 36 chapters, two are devoted solely to mending. In contrast to *The Dressmaker*, which is a slim volume that largely keeps a sharp focus on specific sewing techniques, *The Art of Needlecraft* is laden with additional cultural information, relating to domestic life in Britain during the interwar years, offering up broad-brush impressions and tiny details in equal measure. In particular, the contents and the way in which the subject matter is discussed provides useful information relating to social class in the United Kingdom at this time.

While sources of the nineteenth century reiterate mending as an activity of children (primarily girls), the working classes and the poor, examination of these early twentieth-century sewing manuals suggests a shift towards it being an activity for the middle classes, too. Whereas the working classes had been instructed en masse within schools and their communities in the previous century, the middle classes of the early twentieth century learned about mending in a far more private way via these instructive manuals. This might also reflect higher levels of literacy within the middle classes, as well as the disposable income available to purchase such books. However, for the middle-class domestic mender, notions of respectability were implicit rather than explicit, and presented as just a part of good household management, aligned with laundry practices.

Within her study of interwar Britain, Catherine Horwood notes that even for middle-class women:

> Clothes cleaning and repairs were still one of the largest chores for the middle-class woman either to cope with herself or oversee. For many middle-class women evening leisure involved some element of darning, mending or knitting for the family while listening to the radio.[45]

This is reflected in the instruction in *The Art of Needlecraft* that: “it is a good habit to do each week’s mending as soon as it comes from the wash; in this way holes and worn places are prevented from getting too bad.”[46] Elsewhere, the ongoing nature of mending work is communicated as the authors advise readers to “Keep the best parts [of old garments] in a bag ready for patching.”[47] They go on to explain that new materials should not be used for patching as they will shrink at a different rate and distort the garment. This degree of thriftiness may seem incongruous in a book that also advises on making cushions for your boat or verandah, and on refurbishing fur coats, but the 1930s was a time of economic difficulty and high unemployment in the United Kingdom and women of all classes would have been concerned with making household resources go further.

A theme across both publications is the articulation of mending as a preventative rather than a restorative measure. Whilst detailed instructions of three types of darning and multiple types of patching are given in *The Dressmaker*, above all, what this chapter indicates is the centrality of darning and mending to the practice of dressmaking: it was integral. It is explicitly positioned as a preventative activity: “Every one will agree that a patch is better than a hole, but it is still better to postpone, and, if possible, to prevent, the hole wherever the case will permit it.” [48] Similarly, *The Art of Needlecraft* suggests that: “It is a good plan to darn new stockings in the places most likely to wear into holes”[49] and they even recommend reinforcing the seams of underwear.[50] Even the smallest scraps of leftover should be saved:

> Don’t forget that some odds and ends must be kept for mending! Socks need refooting, and all garments whether of children or grown-ups need mending sooner or later, so some wool must be kept for this. It is almost impossible to buy the right shade to mend a garment.[51]

Implicit here is the notion that knitted garments would be homemade; another set of craft skills that were expected to be part of the household repertoire for women. Thus, we see that the life span of a garment was something to be thought about from the outset, its wear and tear anticipated, reflecting knowledge about how clothing is worn, where the body exerts most strain and how to prevent damage.

There are some tips on mending that may seem strange to the modern reader, for instance the recommendation to make a clothing repair using: “a hair from your head if it is the right colour. Hair is strong and yet fine.”[52] The invisibility of the repair work is also stressed: “particular care should be taken to make the work as inconspicuous as possible,”[53] a sentiment that is reiterated in other instructive texts. For instance, Timo Rissanen notes that in the *Women’s Institute Library of Dressmaking*, 1923, repair is discussed in detail, and “reminds the reader several times that the end result should be inconspicuous.”[54] Meanwhile the actual technique of darning of stockings is dealt with differently by *The Dressmaker* and *The Art of Needlecraft*. While *The Dressmaker* recommends darning on the right side "to keep a smooth surface next the foot,"[55] thus ensuring greater comfort, *The Art of Needlecraft* recommends wrong-side repair, insisting that "if this darning is carefully worked with matching wool, it will not show on the right side."[56] Further instructions are subsequently given for removing these darning threads once they start to wear, and redoing the repair, underlining the seemingly endless struggle to extend the life of basic items of everyday clothing. Yet despite these appeals to thriftiness and good household management, there is a recurrent acknowledgement that—just as de Dillmont had indicated in the nineteenth century—repair work is boring: "Mending is not always interesting but it is very necessary."[57]

Make Do and Mend: Clothing Repair During WWII

The 1940s was a time during which household mending attained special cultural prominence in the UK, albeit out of necessity, and "mending was raised to the status of a respectable art."[58] Raw materials that would usually have been used for clothing—wool, cotton, leather—were needed for the creation of uniforms and other military supplies, creating an imperative for the lifespan of clothing to be extended further than ever. As the previous section has indicated, many women at this time would already be familiar with practices of repair as part of their routine domestic work. So rather than seeing "Make Do and Mend" as an entirely new proposition for households, it might more usefully be regarded as a continuation of activities which the economic pressures of the 1930s had already established, but this time not just for the most economically disadvantaged.

However, this mobilization of existing domestic mending skills took a little time to gain momentum. A survey on clothes rationing conducted in 1941 revealed insights into practices of garment repair in the United Kingdom at that time.[59] Specifically, when asked how they might make their clothing coupons last longer, 63% of respondents had few ideas, a finding which seems to have alarmed the authors of the report:

> The lack of enterprise displayed on this particular point was especially great. Of the comparatively small proportion who perceived any necessity to do anything definite about it, less than a dozen out of 600 women interviewed, put forward any really constructive ideas on the subject.[60]

Of those 600 women asked, only 8% said that mending was a step they would take to make clothes last longer. The findings were further broken down, identifying that whilst women of higher socioeconomic status (categories A and B) planned to alter or clean clothes more often to get them to last longer, women in the lower social class categories of C and D would be more likely to mention mending as a strategy.[61] The tone of concern expressed in the report is palpable: as the war progressed, raw materials would become increasingly scarce. In light of this, the British Board of Trade decided that the care of clothing needed to be actively promoted, targeting women and girls of all social classes. Though the Board toyed with the idea of compulsory mending classes, it was left to the Women's Institute and other civic organizations to implement such activities.[62]

These practical, community-based measures were supported in 1943 by the publication of a "Make do And Mend" pamphlet. Giving detailed guidance on how to refashion and repair clothing, the small booklet sold half a million copies within the first two weeks of circulation.[63] Not only was mending and the imaginative re-use of materials presented as practical and economically essential during wartime, it was promoted as an active display of patriotism. Thus, the concept of "Make Do and Mend" entered the popular imagination and is often regarded as a benchmark of a "waste not, want not" behavior in the United Kingdom. At no other time—certainly within British cultural history—has there been a document that so explicitly lays out how to look after clothing. As Summers observes: "The message was quite clear: nothing should be wasted, every scrap of clothing should be rendered useful."[64] In the USA, meanwhile, the pressure on resources was being experienced less severely, meaning there was less of an imperative to maintain clothing. The magazine *Collier's* told its readers that "mending, patching, and hemming dresses and skirts 'may not be a very exciting way of winning a war, but it's a very real way."[65] (Strasser, 1999: 232).

Yet the mending instructions being disseminated at this time were not purely informational. Just as the sewing manuals of the nineteenth century and 1930s contained coded social messages, war-time repairs had to be carried out to a certain standard: "Relax and mend at leisure and do not resent it, for when you mend hurriedly, you have not mended well."[66]

With men engaged in active military service across the world, women had acquired all manner of work and social responsibilities, so mending was just another task on the list. For middle-class readers of *Vogue* there may have been a dimension of novelty to repairing and renovating clothing, but the experience would be very different for working-class women: "Poor women were working and would not have had the time to repair clothes, nor would the quality of clothing they had been used to buying stand up to much patching."[67] This issue of quality is hugely significant, and one which is revisited when considering mending in a contemporary context. Some services were available to deal with the most tiresome mending tasks such as darning hosiery and Summers notes that small mending shops appeared in British high streets, offering re-footing and repair services, specifically for socks and stockings.[68] However, it seems likely that these would have been used by wealthier households, with less well-off women doing that work themselves.

The phrase "Make do and Mend" has left a curious legacy. Though inextricably linked to the extreme, exceptional demands of the World War II era, the retro aesthetics of these campaigns are often evoked in contemporary discussions of mending. Rather than being seen as a symbol of national crisis, the cheery but utilitarian imagery through which the values of mending were communicated have continued to resonate, albeit in a peculiarly British way.

Cheap Fashion and the "Disappearance" of Mending

The notion of "making do" is not something that fitted well with the optimistic spirit that the world wanted to embrace after 1945. As postwar austerity gave way to economic regeneration across Europe in the 1950s, one might assume that general economic prosperity rendered the imperative to mend redundant. In his work, Timo Rissanen revisits historical sources, observing that in John Guilfoyle Williams' 1945 text, *The Wear and Care of Clothing*, "repair is barely discussed: instead, the author focusses on how to delay the need for repair."[69] But in reality, there is evidence to suggest that many were still making do and mending in postwar Britain. Research carried out in 1949 revealed 58.5% of women categorized as "housewives" were still darning and 51.2% were doing mending that involved sewing. A similar picture emerges for "non-housewives," with 49.9% darning and 40.2% doing other types of mending.[70] This corresponds with Susan Strasser's observation that: "Until the second half of the 20th century, the great majority of people even in the most developed countries could not afford to discard clothes all household furnishings until they were worn out."[71] So while there was no longer the same active promotion of mending, the work was still being done.

At this point in history, the evidence trail for repaired clothing becomes indistinct. Through the second half of the twentieth century, the availability of cheap, mass-produced fashion undoubtedly contributed to a decline in everyday domestic mending skills, leading some to claim that: "mending has died out."[72] Crawford discusses this loss of these skills in relation to accelerated practices of consumption: "what ordinary people once made, they buy; and what they once fixed for themselves, they replace entirely or hire an expert to repair,"[73] and with specific reference to the United Kingdom, Gregson and Crewe observe that:

> the clothing industry is in decline nationally and therefore there are fewer demands for sewing skills in the workplace, and also because stitching, sewing and making-up skills are practiced less familially in the home and formally through education.[74]

Here, a direct link is made between skills and knowledge that once belonged to an entire workforce, and the application of them to repair within the domestic setting. It is easy, therefore, to see how and why mending largely fell away as an activity for all but the very poorest of people, but this narrative offers an incomplete picture. We know that practices of mending and repair have never truly disappeared: it just depends on where you look for evidence of it. One such example is Cuba, forced into decades of making do and mending by geopolitical circumstances. Middleton observes that "here is Cuba, everything is mended, and every person is a mender,"[75] yet little seems to have been written on this particular manifestation of mending on a national level, certainly not in terms of clothing repair.

Elsewhere, a more developed case study is offered by Eiko Siniawer in her work on waste reduction initiatives in Japan in the 1970s.[76] Government organizations, corporations and social groups all contributed to campaigns around saving resources and energy, and during this time "swap meets and repair centres got off the ground."[77] Rather than being a rejection of consumption practices, she suggests that it was way of "maintaining affluent middle class lifestyles."[78] These values also took the form of a publication produced in 1973 by the Better Home Association. However, thanks to the *Yomiuri* newspaper, this came to be known as "a stinginess guidebook,"[79] suggesting that the compilation of tips and hints on reducing household waste was not necessarily appreciated by the whole of Japanese society. Though Siniawer describes this push towards better use of resources as being "utterly of its moment,"[80] echoes of its philosophy are evident in contemporary "zero waste" campaigns, which emphasise low levels of consumption and careful use of resources generally, including clothing repairs.

Mending in the Twenty-First Century: A Re-Emergence of Repair

In recent years there has been an identifiable resurgence in mending, evidenced by the growth in popularity of repair groups in many countries,[81] and made globally visible through mending-related posts on social media. This grassroots activity has coincided with increased consumer interest in more sustainable fashion products as well as the growth of "slow fashion,"[82] and more prominent criticism of a fashion system that encourages overconsumption.[83] Mending, some argue, is part of the solution to the systemic problems present within the garment industry, although some researchers see it simply as a specific response to straightened economic circumstances. In their study, Laitala and Boks found that "more mending occurs in lower income families,"[84] reiterating a reality that has punctuated every section of this chapter. Regardless of the reasons for new interest in mending, its increased cultural presence warrants further analysis.

The Aesthetics of Contemporary Mending

A notable feature of contemporary clothing repair is the apparent popularity of the "visible mend." Whereas historically the emphasis was on restoring a garment to form of neatness where the repair was barely visible, some of the most prominent versions of mending today display the work in a highly conspicuous manner. Indeed, so prevalent is this phenomenon that Middleton states that "the invisible menders have all but disappeared."[85] Social media, and Instagram in particular have become popular locations for sharing photos and videos of mending. Perhaps inevitably, those repairs that are most colorful and texturally interesting become the most widely circulated images, and textile practitioners such as Celia Pym and Tom Van Deijnen attract thousands of followers, with likes and comments reflecting enthusiastic interest from this online community. Moreover, such is the wider interest that over the summer months of 2022, the cultural space of Somerset House put on a series of exhibitions and events "exploring ideas around care, repair and healing."[86]

As the scholarly study of clothing practices has developed, so too has recognition of cultures outside of traditional western fashion, and such systems provide useful alternative models for thinking about repair. Leren Li[87] observes that a series of exhibitions in the early 2000s prompted a surge of interest in the traditional Japanese stitch techniques of *boro* and *sashiko*, introducing them to a wide global audience. Her research work explores the cultural history of *boro*, explaining that it "combines materials, techniques and aesthetics that are rooted in Japanese mending culture and textile traditions."[88] Timo Rissanen's work on sustainable fashion design provides a detailed explanation of the specific aesthetics of *boro* garments:

> A spectacular aspect of these coats is their ability to 'absorb' repair without compromise to their aesthetic appeal. A hole is covered with a quilted patch of fabric; the patch is initially darker but fades over time. While the number of patches grows, the overall look of the coat is maintained: the patches become the coat.[89]

The stitching technique of *sashiko*—which utilizes a simple but uniform running stitch in geometric designs—has similarly become extremely popular within online mending communities. Practitioners such as Katrina Rodabaugh make extensive use of it in their mending manuals, thus circulating what used to be niche Japanese practices to a much wider global audience. Yet it is repeatedly discussed as being much more than a mending technique: Rodabaugh writes about the "magnificent visceral beauty"[90] of original *boro* garments and even the fashion brand Toast prominently displays features about *sashiko* stitching on its website.[91] Currently, the proliferation of online posts displaying and celebrating contemporary versions of *boro* and other forms of visible mending are testimony to the appeal of mending techniques that are not hidden.

The Social Politics of Repair

Visible mending, though enjoyed and practiced by enthusiasts across the world, has a very specific aesthetic which runs counter to dominant ideas about how fashionable clothing should look. For most of the past two hundred years, mending has been a mainstream activity, but for many contemporary menders, and those who write about mending, it is as much about challenging dominant models of clothing consumption as it is about keeping a garment in a wearable condition. This is evident in the writings of Durrani,[92] Li,[93] Middleton,[94] Portwood-Stacer,[95] and Rodabaugh.[96] The work of mending can therefore be identified as an anti-consumption practice and a form of activism as "repair creates a kind of visual language that spreads the word about the importance of reuse in the age of climate change."[97] Others argue that the highly visible nature of the mended clothing is essential, for "to reveal is to make political."[98] Durrani, meanwhile, argues that engagement with these activities facilitates "new practices of wearing mended garments with pride instead of shame,"[99] thus reversing the centuries-old stigma of repaired clothing. Further value in mending is suggested by Rodabaugh: she sees it as an educational gateway to a better understanding of production methods and labour conditions within the fashion industry.[100] Li, meanwhile, proposes that: "*boro* and other mending practises offer a way of communicating human warmth and finding both individuality and social belonging."[101]

But alongside the evident benefits—environmental, social, personal—that mending can bring, it is necessary to question its limitations as a solution to the myriad problems of the fashion industry today. Firstly, and most simply: not everyone will be enticed by the aesthetics of visible mending. Secondly, as highlighted at numerous points throughout this chapter, successful mending is heavily dependent upon the quality of the garments in the first place and fast fashion garments will simply not withstand much mending. Thirdly, there is the question of who will take on the routine work of mending. This chapter has consistently shown that historically, women have nearly always done it, but even those with an active interest in sewing may shun the mundane task of mending.[102] For many, the widespread availability of cheap clothing has offered the opportunity to reject this form of unpaid labor. In light of this, is it problematic that mending groups often seem to be geared towards women, implicitly if not explicitly? There is a tendency for women to gravitate towards the mending of clothing whilst men tended to be more interested in the repair of electrical items and furniture,[103] an observation that corresponds with Gregson and Crewe's findings that "sets of practical and/or expert knowledges … are often, though not exclusively, gender-specific."[104] Likewise, Durrani's detailed study of mending groups in four different countries found that women tended to form the majority of participants.[105] One might conclude, therefore, that it is not the act of mending itself that is gendered. Rather, that the specific commodities that are repaired—i.e., clothes—carry gendered connotations.

However, the mending investigated by Durrani[106] and Li[107] suggests that the negative associations of this unpaid work are shaken off in some contexts. Perhaps the act of mending in a public space, as a social activity liberates it: "work" is reborn as "leisure." In this sense, twenty-first century clothing repair might be characterized quite differently to that of previous eras: it is not an imperative, routine household task where mending is essential for keeping clothes wearable. Rather, it is a leisure activity which can be the site of experimentation, which can be put off or even abandoned because there is not a real scarcity of clothing. Nevertheless, the mender must have "the vision to recognize the potential of a commodity that might not be apparent in its current form and the skill to effect this transformation."[108] Within this "vision" resides a huge amount of intangible knowledge about design, fabric, fibers and techniques, the "hidden" components of textile work that previous generations have had huge competencies in. So it is evident that mending clothes on an individual level can be a profoundly enjoyable and empowering activity. But it is also a site where objects become transformed: "challenging the garments' limits, reconstructing, redesigning, and repurposing already designed clothing through repair."[109] But even the most enthusiastic domestic mender must recognize the limitations of *individual* mending as a solution the multiple complex problems of the clothing and apparel industries.

Designing for Repair

To understand the broader potential impact of contemporary mending, one needs to look towards systems that facilitate mending more generally. Timo Rissanen asks pertinent questions relating to this:

> How could one design garments whose value is not diminished by alteration or repair? … the consumer would need to see beauty in the patina of the used, the repaired, for such practice to become widespread.[110]

There are two ways of approaching this. Firstly, the concept of creating repairable designs, clothes that are intended to be mended at some point in their lifespan. This idea is considered by Alison Gwilt, following the model of of "cradle to cradle" design as advocated by those including McDonough and Braungart[111] and Fletcher.[112] In their work, Kathleen Dombrek-Keith and Suzanne Loker consider modular clothing design, where the parts of garments most likely to become damaged through regular wear can be replaced,[113] while Amy Twigger Holroyd considers radical ways of reworking garments.[114] Some of these suggestions have parallel with garment design of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where elements of clothing such as collars and cuffs and sleeves might be separate, facilitating more frequent laundry, repair, and replacement.

Secondly, it is helpful to recognize the value of networks of repair service that co-exist alongside the secondhand clothes trade. Alberta St. John James and Anthony Kent discuss the secondhand clothing market in Accra, Ghana, noting that "there were at least two alleyways in which repairers congregated to repair and hand-dye heavily used or torn garments or to alter them for resale."[115] Specifically, they observe that: "torn and damaged denim garments are repaired by sewing machinists and hand-dyed where the workers decide the colour should be renewed."[116] This provides detail of the type of garment that is deemed worth repairing and restoring within this context. This proximity of repair and mending to practices of alteration, adaptation and re-use of garments reiterates the idea expressed throughout this chapter that mending is a form of making rather than a qualitatively separate entity.

A third direction constitutes a shift of responsibility of repair back to retailers and brands, a service which a small number of fashion brands do already offer. For instance, Toast offers a "renewal" service where garments can be patched or darned after consultation with an in-house expert.[117] Similarly, Christine Harold details the outdoor clothing brand, Patagonia, well-known for having an ethos that maintains sustainability values: "Stories of backpacks, sleeping bags, and parkas being battered and worn, but no less beloved, support the company's mission to encourage mending rather than tossing their gear."[118] A visit to the company's website displays an article that celebrates "The joy, meditation and quiet rebellion of fixing your clothes by hand."[119] However, this approach is only viable with higher value brands such as the examples indicated above, reiterating the important role that high-quality fiber, fabric, and construction has in establishing the potentiality of repair.

Concluding Comments

The examination of historical examples of mending provides some insights into the value ascribed to clothing in the past, as well as specific detail regarding the level of skills and knowledge that previously existed within general populations. However, it is also clear that the work of mending brings with it its own problems: wholesale revival of such practices such as they existed in the 1930s and 1940s are simply not viable or appropriate for contemporary consumers. Nevertheless, there are numerous valuable lessons to be learnt from past examples of mending, particularly when also considering culturally specific repair practices such as those that exist in countries like Japan or Ghana.

Through this study of mending across a range of time periods and, where possible, different geographical locations, mending is revealed to be a complex phenomenon that encapsulates a range of material and socio-economic issues. While historically mending has generally been perceived as a domestic, feminine activity, carrying connotations of material deprivation, today it can be understood as a cultural phenomenon that is replete with both social significance and potential solutions to some of the pressing problems of the fashion industry.

Notes

1 Middleton, "Mending," 263.
2 Gibson and Stanes, "Is Green the New Black?," 175.
3 König, "A Stitch in Time."
4 Gordon, "Meanings."
5 Campbell and Brandt, "No Seamstresses."
6 Richmond, Clothing the Poor.
7 Mass Observation Archive UK.
8 Strasser, Waste and Want, 38.
9 www.celiapym.com
10 Rodabaugh, Mending Matters.
11 https://tomofholland.com/
12 Sayer, "Sufficiency of Clothing," 118.
13 Lemire, "Shifting Currency," 34.
14 Lemire, "Shifting Currency," 35.
15 Cramer, "Keeping Up Appearances," 56.
16 Strasser, "Waste and Want," 40.
17 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework.
18 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework," 9.
19 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework," 22.
20 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework," 25.
21 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework," 26.
22 Sayer, "Sufficiency of Clothing," 118.
23 Cramer, "Keeping up Appearances," 52.
24 Strasser, Waste and Want, 41.
25 Sayer, "Sufficiency of Clothing," 116.

26 Sayer, "Sufficiency of Clothing," 121.
27 Cramer, "Keeping up Appearances," 58.
28 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 100.
29 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 96.
30 Barker and Hamlett, "Living Above the Shop."
31 De Dillmont, "Encyclopedia of Needlework," 22.
32 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 117.
33 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 117.
34 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 118.
35 Parker, Subversive Stitch.
36 Hamlett, Material Relations.
37 Herrick, Housekeeping Made Easy, 151-152.
38 Cited by Appignanesi, Mad, Bad and Sad, 30.
39 Sayer, "Sufficiency of Clothing," 114.
40 Burman, Culture of Sewing, 40.
41 Pember Reeves, Round About a Pound.
42 Richmond, Clothing the Poor, 96.
43 The Dressmaker.
44 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft.
45 Horwood, Keeping up Appearances, 66.
46 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 136.
47 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 141.
48 The Dressmaker, 16.
49 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 137.
50 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 533.
51 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 347.
52 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 139.
53 The Dressmaker, 16.
54 Rissanen, Shaping Sustainable Fashion, 129.
55 The Dressmaker, 17.
56 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 138.
57 Polkinghorne and Polkinghorne, Art of Needlecraft, 136.
58 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 133.
59 Clothes Rationing Survey.
60 Clothes Rationing Survey, 55.
61 Clothes Rationing Survey, 56.
62 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 130.
63 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 134.
64 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 131.
65 Strasser, Waste and Want, 232.
66 Vogue, 36.
67 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 130.
68 Summers, Fashion on the Ration, 140.
69 Rissanen, Shaping Sustainable Fashion, 128.
70 *The £.s.d. of Home Sewing.*
71 Strasser, Waste and Want, 4.
72 Clark, "SLOW + FASHION," 435.
73 Crawford, Case for Working, 2.
74 Gregson and Crewe, Second-Hand Cultures, 166.
75 Middleton, "Mending," 262.
76 Siniawer, Waste.
77 Siniawer, Waste, 96.
78 Siniawer, Waste, 96.
79 Siniawer, Waste, 136.
80 Siniawer, Waste, 136.
81 König, Stitch in Time.
82 Fletcher, Sustainable Fashion.

83 Hoskins, Stitched Up.
84 Laitala and Boks, "Sustainable Clothing Design," 132.
85 Middleton, "Mending," 268.
86 www.somersethouse.org.uk/whats-on/eternally-yours
87 Li, Reviving Boro.
88 Li, Reviving Boro, 4.
89 Rissanen, "Designing Endurance," 130.
90 Rodabaugh, Mending Matters," 108.
91 www.to.ast
92 Durrani, "Like Stitches to a Wound."
93 Li, Reviving Boro.
94 Middleton, "Mending."
95 Portwood-Stacer, "Anti-consumption."
96 Rodabaugh, Mending Matters.
97 Archer, "Beauty after Damage," 75.
98 Middleton, "Mending," 268.
99 Durrani, "Like Stitches to a Wound," 799.
100 Rodabaugh, Mending Matters, 79.
101 Li, Reviving Boro, 282.
102 Gregson and Crewe, Second-Hand Cultures, 166.
103 König, "Stitch in Time."
104 Gregson and Crewe, Second-Hand Cultures, 163.
105 Durrani, "Like Stitches to a Wound," 785.
106 Durrani, "Like Stitches to a Wound."
107 Li, Reviving Boro.
108 Gregson and Crewe, Second-Hand Cultures, 164.
109 Durrani, "Like Stitches to a Wound," 787.
110 Rissanen, Designing Endurance," 130.
111 McDonough and Braungart, Cradle to Cradle.
112 Fletcher, Sustainable Fashion.
113 Dombrek-Keith and Loker, "Sustainable Clothing Care," 101-114.
114 Twigger Holroyd, Folk Fashion.
115 St. John James and Kent, "Clothing Sustainability," 383.
116 St. John James and Kent, "Clothing Sustainability," 379.
117 https://www.toa.st/pages/toast-renewal
118 Harold, Things Worth Keeping, 142.
119 Patagonia, "Mending Life."

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Part II

The Politics of Fashion and Dress

7 National and Regional Dress

Jennifer Van Haaften and Annette Lynch

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw transformation in global society and politics that also affected changes in dress across cultures around the globe. In European and other Western based societies, industrialization altered the methods and costs for getting materials and tools to create clothing. Technological discoveries allowed deeper penetration into remote regions of the world, exposing more cultures to outside influences and the dominant outside cultures to the "untouched" groups. These inroads into remote regions were partly due to the continued Western colonization and control of nations and cultures they deemed "primitive," as well as movement into the more remote regions throughout Europe once very isolated. Early in the 1800s, empires and economic control covered much of Europe and Asia, but as society proceeded toward the end of the nineteenth century, conflicts created new borders, and leaders consolidated smaller kingdoms and principalities into nation-states claiming homogenous language and culture to justify their actions. Empires shrank back to borders that encompassed areas with similar language and culture or expanded to dominate several groups that were sometimes related and often disparate. Liberalism took hold in many Western countries, forcing hereditary leaders to evolve their governing practices and adjust their tactics to bring their citizens into a national mindset to maintain control.[1] These upheavals and evolutions led to the elevation of certain types of dress that signaled national loyalty and nationalism for more cohesion.

The early twentieth century was a continuation of colonial practices. Dominant countries maintained empire building although conquered cultures were later given the semblance of being separate but equal in the empires, most recognizably in the British Commonwealth. Just like in the nineteenth century, global competition for land, resources, and commerce caused conflict as countries attempted to wrest control in different parts of the world. Governing classes continued to use nationalism to bring conquered cultures under the umbrella of the dominant nation-state, while at the same time creating a sense of belonging and loyalty for the original nation-state citizens. The resulting world wars destroyed the dominance of western European nations and established the Soviet Union and the United States in global dominance. However, nation building, including the use of dress, continued, especially in newly created communist countries establishing new governance and citizen compliance. The twentieth century also saw a revival of regional and ethnic dress as a way for oppressed groups to reclaim their erased cultures and heritages or as a way for immigrant groups to assert their shared identity in their new nations. In the United States, the melting pot ethos encouraged people of European descent to express their ancestry through folk dress and activities, which was echoed by newer immigrant groups, like the Hmong. US

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marginalized groups like Indigenous people and Blacks also expressed their reclamation of their culture through dress. These themes could also be seen in other countries throughout the world. Some countries tolerated the rise of ethnic and cultural identity; others repressed it, as in the case of the conflict over the hijab in many European countries. Twentieth century immigrant groups throughout the world used ceremonial, religious, and traditional dress in an attempt to maintain their original identity even as their children assimilated or integrated into the culture of the country to which they had moved.

Fashion and dress are entwined with the changes in global society like all other aspects of culture. As far as regional and ethnic dress are concerned, what began as everyday clothing in more isolated regions across the globe, became symbols of the nation-state building in Europe in the nineteenth century. Europe and white societies of North America and Australia also entered an age of scientific codification that was used across disciplines studied in upper and upper middle classes. Darwin's theories of evolution began to be applied to societies and culture. To this end, focus on regional dress in the nineteenth century is centered on the studies made in service of European nation building and domination and we decided to start there. We acknowledge this is a very Western mindset, but regional and ethnic categories are inherently a Western mindset, and we discuss that through our exploration of cultural European nation-state building. European conflicts in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century led to additional uses of regional and ethnic dress to create homogenous societies, even though in some cases particular regional dress is used for nation building in separate nations at separate times. We also explore how conquered cultures use dress to delineate themselves from conquerors and to indicate quest for independence. Conflicts and economic upheaval across both centuries cause people to migrate and immigrate, though sometimes forcibly as in the enslavement of African people, creating tension between the immigrant group cultures brought to the new country. We chose to explore how these non-dominant culture groups use dress to connect with their roots and express pride in their past. In the United States, oppressed groups like Black and Indigenous populations also take up dress to express connection with their past. This multi-culturalism gained popularity in the mainstream white culture in the second half of twentieth century in the United States with European descendants claiming their heritage with their approximation of folk costumes of European countries. The movement of people across the globe also brings to the fore the conflict between what makes a nation and its culture unique when people of other cultures move and meld within these cultures, which we explore with the case of the Norwegian bunad.

Nineteenth-Century National and Regional Dress

Industrialization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in European countries established itself in population centers to have easy access to a worker pool. This in turn created a migration from rural areas to the urban areas as the economy shifted and reestablished itself through the changes in commerce, land use, and government regulations. The rural economy declined, and industrial opportunities beckoned to those that found it more and more difficult to remain on lands owned by others. This in turn led to the elite and wealthy developing a concern that their pastoral way of life was disappearing, coinciding with the period of Romanticism in art, architecture, and literature in the mid-nineteenth century that celebrated a perceived simple life in rural settings. This interest in "old-fashioned" living and dress found its way into academia and amateur upper-class scholars who began to collect "peasant" items for display and study. These practices were parallel with the rising development of museums in the early and mid-nineteenth century as places for display of historical and cultural artifacts, with the emphasis on nationalism through celebration of a nation's accomplishments at international expositions, and with the rise of ethnography to study colonized cultures considered primitive by Western citizens.[2]

Great Britain initiated the international exposition rivalry with the Great Exhibition of 1851 housed in the Crystal Palace in London, England. The exhibition was meant to allow invited countries to share their industry, commerce, and arts, and promote international cooperation.[3] It also allowed for the participating countries to share displays that demonstrated what made them a nation, which included regional dress meant to convey the entirety of what a nation was. These international expositions continued through the early twentieth century, taking place in mostly Western European countries, the United States, and Australia. Occurring between two and eight years apart for about 65 years, the formula for expositions included display of peasant or rural clothing from regions that the elite fantasized were untouched by the globalizing industrial progress.[4] In addition to regional clothing from the home country, empires used the expositions as opportunities to show their expansive reach across the globe. Their displays often featured peoples removed from their conquered lands and put in settings that approximated their original surroundings, in their traditional dress, set to the task of living their lives under the gaze of curious Western tourists just like animals in zoos.[5]

These displays of peasant culture and human zoos at expositions echoed the same path as the discipline of ethnography and the development of museums that shared the same kind of artifacts demonstrating peasant and "primitive" lives, both in the traditional type of museum we know today and open air, like Skansen of Sweden. Ethnographer Artur Hazelius developed Skansen to go beyond the static displays of the Nordiska Museet, which he also founded. His original displays of rural dress from the farther reaches of Sweden were placed in life-size dioramas that depicted what was considered a disappearing agricultural past. Skansen took this further by also collecting the buildings in which these people had lived and sharing demonstration of folk celebrations and activities. Admiration for Hazelius' dioramic displays at international expositions created a competition of sorts among other nations to create more and more realistic experiences of rural life from their countries throughout the last quarter of the century as a sort of national pride and national distinction from the others.[6]

In these remote regions, certain rural and peasant costumes, which had remained intact because of the isolation and lack of movement over long distances due to the difficulty and length of time required, were "discovered" by middle-class urban dwellers who studied subjects as if they were relics of the past. These urban middle-class citizens also romanticized the rural way of life, along with the conservative wealthy landowners who once relied on peasant labor and were starting to see it dwindle on their property. They held up these people as the sturdy stock from whence their nations were built, while at the same time participating in and leading the capitalist industrial processes that were transforming the lives of the rural peasant to an urban working class. The effect of displaying these regional costumes at the world expositions created a sort of shorthand by associating nations with only one regional costume of their country in the late nineteenth century. This resulted in the Swedish national costume assumed to be that of the Dalarna region, Dutch national costume became synonymous with the Hinderloopen area of Friesland, France was associated with Brittany, Poland featured highlanders of the Tatra mountains, and Austro-Hungarians became associated with the costumes of the Transylvanian areas.[7]

Rural peasant lifeways were considered steps along the cultural evolution of nation states. Their costumes, as well as their way of life, were studied by and trotted out for classes considered more evolved, such as nobility, wealthy capitalists, and university ethnographers. National and regional museum displays, like Skansen in Sweden and the Fries Museum in the Netherlands, as well as French regional Musée Breton and Musée du Vieux Granville, were developed to showcase the "old culture," especially highlighting dress, to bolster the idea of evolving from a simple, maybe primitive, state to a national character.[8] As the nineteenth century drew to a close, with international competition for borders growing, interest in preserving folklife and folkways developed out of the sense that peasant or folklife was a "purer" example of national foundation and character. There was also an attempt to show similarity between neighboring native cultures as one way to justify imperial designs on adding land to the nation.[9]

The Hutsul region in the Carpathians between Poland and Ukraine was one such disputed area, where its cultural aesthetics were added to their national catalogs of clothing and artifacts to justify the area to be subsumed within their respective borders. Having been "discovered" by Polish nobles doing ethnographic studies in the 1870s, the creation of a regional exhibition showcasing the Hutsuls' way of life, with a special emphasis on their distinctive clothing, was a result of Polish nobles attempting to make the Hutsul region feel it was at home in Poland. The exhibition was used as a special display for the visit of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph to highlight the Polish connection to the Hutsuls, perhaps in a bid for their own imperial building.[10] Both Polish and Ukrainian urban classes and nobles claimed the Hutsul region as part of their national cultures. This was possibly an attempt to court this cultural group to become part of one or the other nation-state in expanding territory. Although the Polish ruling classes appeared to celebrate the Hutsul culture, displaying it with great fanfare to the emperor in 1880, early-twentieth-century Ukrainians rediscovered this group's lifeways and clothing and went so far as to display Hutsul clothing, tools, and activities as part of the Ukrainian national culture.[11] "In the European context, folklorization was conceived of as a counter to modernization and industrialization and is a by-product of early nineteenth century romanticism."[12]

Although the international nation building used regional folk dress to express the roots of their national character at the end of the nineteenth century, some cultures subsumed by Western colonialism used a rebuilding of their traditional clothing and activities to reestablish their own national character. Christopher Balme in "Dressing the Hula: Iconography, Performance and Cultural Identity Formation in Late Nineteenth Century Hawaii," demonstrates the colonial destruction of traditional Hawaiian dress, specifically for the hula, in the early 1800s. Hula was outlawed when missionaries began arriving in earnest in the 1810s and 1820s. Hula was connected to the religion of the Indigenous people and therefore outlawing it paved the way for Christian conversion. It also led to the breakdown of cultural transmission of pre-contact generations to the ones following. In 1874, when King Kalakaua took the throne, he attempted a revival of the hula performance to form a strong Hawaiian national identity. Much like the European/Western search for cultural roots, the Hawaiian monarch wanted to give his people a better national sense of self to bolster Native claim to sovereignty. "The restoration of hula in its 'traditional' form functioned as a high-profile indicator of cultural and national integrity that late nineteenth century European ideology required."[13] During this period, the sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples of Hawaii was under threat from European and US men of industry and commerce. However, having lost a couple of generations of cultural transmission, the revived hula was an approximation of the original and incorporated elements, especially in dress, that made it more acceptable to the European mindset. Images of hula in the late nineteenth century show clothing distinctly different with bodies fully covered by clothing from the early drawings of Natives in the late 1700s. European ethnographers in the late 1800s searched for practitioners of what they considered the more "pure" form of hula with some imagined notion of appropriate dress and actions that they could not quite find, not understanding their counterparts a century earlier had succeeded in destroying the original character of the dance.[14]

Nationalist Dress Expands into the Twentieth Century

Western cultures, predominantly in Europe, North America, and Australia, bolstered their expansions into other sovereign European countries and cultures around the globe with theories of societal evolution ranked according to levels of industrialization. Expanding into Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands for control of natural resources and to obtain labor, these countries imposed their ideas of appropriate dress, behavior, religion, and culture on the conquered societies. The United States entered the fray, insisting upon its dominance and control over the North and South American continents, in the guise of benevolent leadership. This, among other things, led to the clash between the United States and Spain and marked the United States' major entrance into the imperial expansions that had dominated the foreign policy of many European countries. The Spanish-American War amplified US nationalism, much as many of the nineteenth-century European conflicts had also contributed to many of the nationalistic feelings in Europe. American dress reflected this feeling at the end of the 1890s. Clothing retailers seized upon the nationalist fervor to capitalize sales with advertisements that referenced the destruction of the USS *Maine* in Cuba. Clothing styles of the time used red, white, and blue, images of the *Maine*, emblems that reflected military uniform trimmings, military colors, and avoided colors, like yellow, that reflected the Spanish enemy. Indeed, patriotism emphasized American clothing goods and insisted on avoiding Parisian fashions in favor of American design.[15]

Norway is an interesting example of a European country gaining its independence in the early twentieth century from its neighbor with no bloodshed, while other European countries were expanding territory or maintaining imperial boundaries. As part of the fervor in Norway to demand independence from Sweden, the nationalist Hulda Garborg advocated for a type of dress, mainly for women, that harkened back to Norwegian peasant and agrarian roots. She called it *bunad*, a specific word from an older dialect that she wanted to use it to indicate a formal type of regional Norwegian dress to emphasize Norway's culture and separate identity from its Scandinavian neighbors.[16] The development of the bunad is both rooted in the history of different regions of Norway, but also a modern twentieth-century construct that reinvents the idea of nineteenth-century folk costumes into a nationalistic representation of a romanticized agrarian past.[17] But late-twentieth-century capitalism caught up with the production of bunad and created a stir among those that wear and regulate it, calling into question the rules behind its transfer of culture and cultural signals, while also attempting to exist beside individualism and profit motives. Thomas Eriksen recounts the story of a Chinese Norwegian individual who learned about crafting bunad and took Norwegian fabrics to Shanghai for stitch work, which were returned and put into their final form by the young man. His bunad could be sold at a lower price than the competition that used regional stitchers in Norway. This created a crisis of authenticity in 2002 for bunad adherents, questioning whether bunad made by individuals who were not Norwegian were authentic bunad.[18] The conversation around the accusations from the *Bunad* and Folk Costume Council that these were not bunad, eliciting accusations of racism and a critique of how bunad were regulated, also brought to light that "official" purveyors of bunad outsourced their production to the Baltic States or turned to mechanization of the stitching process in order to lower costs in order to gain profit.[19] Eriksen succinctly sums up the political, economic, and social tensions from this case; Norwegians are looking to maintain their national identity, local economic viability, and a sense of regional pride through their regulation of the production and wearing of bunad.[20]

Centuries of colonialism in Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa led to Indigenous populations beginning their struggle toward self-determination and sovereignty in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This then led to a reversal of accepting European clothing norms to using clothing that reflected the national identity of the subsumed culture. India's struggle against Britain found expression in the rejection of British clothing and the adoption of traditional clothing by India's national leaders in both religion and politics. Religious figures used traditional clothing to signal a return to their roots and simple ways of living reflected in rural areas. It was also a signal to throw off colonial dictates such as forbidden religious practices to return to what India was before the incursion of the European exploiters. Social classes that were closer to the British rulers struggled to find their hybrid identity that was acceptable to the British, but also signaled their loyalty to the emerging need for Indian independence. The resulting uniforms for Indian independence leaders were coats with collars that were not European (later named the Nehru jacket), combined with dhotis, a long cloth wrapped around men's legs to resemble trousers, or turbans to indicate their call back to traditional Indian clothing.[21] Gandhi's transformation from wearing late-nineteenth-century British suit attire to the stripped-down everyday clothing of an Indian farmer as he worked to lead India to independence in the early twentieth century is a prime representation of this practice.[22]

Between World War I and World War II, clashes between imperialistic nations and conquered nations, as well as between the imperial forces themselves, continued to foster nationalist feelings, both for the subsumed nations seeking independence and the imperial nations seeking domination on the world stage. Military uniforms created a sense of unity and belonging for armed forces and, after World War I, uniform clothing for groups of people participating in the same activity beyond the military continued to be popular in many cultures. The late-nineteenth-century ideology of elevating dress of rural ethnic groups as representative of the character of the nation also continued to permeate nationalistic thought. On the surface, this seems to compete with the uniform elevated by certain nationalistic groups, but instead it can live side by side in national psyches. In Italy, this duality of dress is splendidly represented by the *La Grande adunata delle forze femminili* or the great parade of female forces of 1939.[23] This parade featured uniformed women athletes alongside women from the countryside in regional costumes of a wide variety displaying laces, embroidery, jewelry, and craftmanship in their clothing. In the article, "Fashion, the Politics of Style and National Identity in Pre-Fascist and Fascist Italy," author Eugenia Paulicelli argues that a focus on Italian fashion put an emphasis on the handicraft work in regional clothing designs, elevating parts of the peasant or country dress to high Italian fashion designs.[24] This nationalistic sentiment in the 1930s of focusing only on Italian-made regional crafts in national designs is an echo of the earlier sentiment in European nations that regional costumes were examples of the purer roots of the national cultural identity.

Nazi Germany followed the same nationalist patterns in fashion, creating, and protecting its own German fashion industry in the 1930s (and squeezing out Jewish manufacturers at the same time). In addition, the ideal of the German housewife as the propagator of the race was emphasized by turning away from the androgynous styles of the Paris design houses of the 1920s and 1930s and elevating dirndls, folk dress from German-speaking areas of the Alps consisting of a blouse under a laced sleeveless bodice with a skirt and apron, to appropriate everyday dress for women. Dressing in folk costumes was encouraged in places like Austria, which were brought under the Nazi umbrella and encouraged Austrians to reach back to their German roots of a simpler time. German women were enjoined to maintain a feminine look, eschewing overalls and trousers for work clothing that had a waist and skirt emphasizing their curves and femininity. Every German housewife was expected to have at least one dirndl to harken to the simple times of the past, to dress as women, and maintain a natural healthy glow. The natural healthy glow was expected to come from exercise and hard work, but German advertisements acknowledged that women might need a little help to have rosy cheeks and lips.[25]

In the United States, the dirndl also rose in prominence in the same era, but its purpose was to proudly express German immigrant background, especially in the wake of celebrations of the 150th anniversary of signing the Declaration of Independence in 1926 that emphasized white American immigrant backgrounds. For example, variations of the South German or Austrian dirndl style, including a blouse, full skirt, lace-up bodice, and apron originally marked the German regional affiliation and class of the wearer. In the United States, spurred in part also by the American popularity of the Johanna Spyri novel *Heidi*, the dirndl style became both a fashion statement picked up by designers such as Claire McCardell, but also a unified symbol of identity and pride worn by Austrian and German immigrants for festivals and ritualized events marking life cycle changes such as marriages starting in the 1930s.[26] Pre-World War II era immigrants to the United States brought the dirndl with them even as Nazi propaganda used the dirndl as a feminine uniform for their images of the Aryan race.

With the end of World War II, countries picked up the pieces of their war-torn nations. New governments formed throughout the world as communism rose through the ranks of ordinary people to take the place of authoritarian or royal regimes that no longer worked for them. In an attempt to throw off images of the old Chinese regimes, the suit now known as the Mao suit was designed as an alternative to traditional male clothing and Western influenced clothing, worn initially by military officers, but soon taken up by civil servants in the early years of the Chinese Republic. Under Mao Zedong, the suit became the accepted national dress in the Communist regime for men to demonstrate their loyalty to the new regime. Mao Zedong turned Chinese life and culture inside out over his 30-year reign in China, while keeping foreigners at bay. His communist regime supported and was supported by the People's Liberation Army, and focus on military might became reflected in the dress of other national groups in China looking to retain the favor of Chairman Mao.[27] The Chinese Red Guard, an adolescent organization that took inspiration from Mao, who in turn encouraged their organizing and support of his reformations, created their own uniform dress that took parts of the People's Liberation Army and added additional parts, such as the red armband, to signal their belonging to the Red Guard. Like many uniforms of youth, the Red Guard uniform created a sense of belonging, not just to Mao's ideals for China, but also to the other youths who shared in the same thinking. It also gave them a feeling of superiority to administrators and other youths who did not seem to embody and embrace Mao's total revolution of society.[28] This dress, though militaristic in style, supplied the same sense of belonging to adolescents in China that Western fashion fads and anti-fads created for youth in those societies.

Transformation from Regional to Ethnic Dress: United States as an Example

Jonathan Sarna's early research on the American immigrant experience found that groups identified themselves by region and/or subculture when they entered the United States but were then ascribed a homogeneous ethnic group identity by American institutions and power structures. He goes on to argue that ethnic groups responded to this externally imposed classification and the discrimination that often followed by using cultural content to construct symbols of cohesiveness and pride, with dress playing a fundamental role in this process.[29] A late-twentieth-century example of a similar transformation of dress marking regional identity to more unified display of ethnicity is captured by the Hmong refugee group. During the Vietnam War, Hmong, an ethnic minority in the region, were recruited by the American army to fight against Laotian communists. They settled in the United States beginning in the 1970s as a result of their secret role in the Vietnam conflict. Hmong immigration to the United States increased in 1975 after the withdrawal of the American army from Vietnam and the assumption of political power by the Laotian communists. As captured by Sarna's earlier research in American immigrant communities, Hmong entered the United States identifying as different regional subgroups. Different traditional dress styles were historically associated with different regions of Laos and Thailand and with distinct linguistic subgroups of Hmong. The clearest distinctions existed between the two broad categories of Green and White Hmong dress, which corresponded to two major linguistic subgroups. Green Hmong handwork can be most simply identified by the use of blue batik to produce textile patterns. As historically practiced by the Hmong, batik is a wax resist dye technique in which textile designers draw motifs with wax onto hand-spun hemp and then dye with indigo creating an indigo blue cloth with a white pattern. Time-intensive White Hmong handwork used the reverse appliqué technique to produce intricate white patterns. Scholars trace the roots of the Lao Hmong subgroups which are marked by corresponding differences in styles to China where the Han Chinese ascribed separate status to various subcategories of Hmong cultural groups known within China as the Miao.[30] Sub-styles of dress in the Lao context were internally perceived and understood categories. Sally Petersen points out in her 1990 dissertation on Hmong "flower cloth" the extensive information that was carried by dress in Lao Hmong communities:

> The individual is recognized as Hmong by other Hmong, who with a glance will know if the stranger they meet shares their dialect, marriage customs, house style, spiritual offerings, standards of beauty in clothing and song, and other cultural facets that distinguish one subgroup from another. They mutually recognize, in a twinkling, what kinds of limits might structure their future relationship.[31]

Dress thus immediately set up a relationship between the Hmong individual wearing the dress and the Hmong individual perceiving the dress. The two individuals knew how to respond to one another and what relationships were possible based on internally understood visual cues.

Beginning in the early 1990s within the United States, teenage Hmong girls typically own and wear a wide variety of sub-styles of Hmong dress and do not feel confined to wearing only the dress styles of their family of origin. For younger community members identifying as a Hmong American, rather than a Lao Hmong, they often associated their identity with the freedom to wear other subgroups' styles as captured in this quote from an interview with a Hmong American Teen of the Year Contestant in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the early 1990s:

> See, that is the change now. Now we can wear any one – any kind. I could be a Green Hmong, I could wear White Hmong clothes, it doesn't really matter. It doesn't really matter in Laos, too, but in Laos you wear what you are. But now it is the style–if you like it, you wear it. We are becoming Americanized in that way.[32]

It was typical that these teenagers discussed the impulse to wear the other styles or to mix the styles as a fashion impulse or as an aesthetic choice. "It looks good" and "it is the new style" were often the words used by the teenagers to justify their clothing choices. The following response captures the style maker's attitude: "I usually mix them up. I wear the hat with the White, and the hat doesn't go with the White dress … . It surely looks good so why not?"[33]

Interestingly, Thomas DuBois describes his interaction of a similar vein with a Norwegian folk dancer at Seattle's Nordic Heritage Museum. She explained, "'I wanted to get a bunad [traditional Norwegian folk dress] from my grandmother's village. I wanted that connection to her and to my past. But really, the costume from her village is just *awful*, so I decided on one from another village instead.'" DuBois' informant demonstrated that although the desire to connect with the past was there, it clashed with the desire to look good.[34] This desire seems to infiltrate more than one descendant immigrant group in the United States.

Similar to the evolution of the dirndl style, Hmong-style dress, while worn on an everyday basis in Laos, is reserved for special occasions in the United States. Hmong American women are typically married in Hmong-style or Hmong-inspired dress and families dress up for family photographs in the summer. The largest public display of Hmong American dress is the annual celebration of New Year across the country. While for much of the year community members try hard to fit into American culture, the New Year as celebrated in the United States is an opportunity to be Hmong again in a supportive community environment. The large public celebrations of Hmong New Year held in St. Paul, Minnesota, in the 1980s up to the present, like comparable nineteenth-century immigrant celebrations, drew upon long-standing practices yet were adapted to the new American context.[35] In the late 1980s, the auditorium floor was dominated by a traditional ball toss courtship ritual by day and a rock-and-roll dance by night. The stage featured performances ranging from shamanistic rituals to heavy metal rock and roll Hmong American punk bands. The conflicts inherent in the position of Hmong teens as the generation caught between Hmong and American culture were acted out in the structure of the New Year celebration, which in 1989 moved from an opening day focused on the Hmong past to a closing day focused on the Hmong future in America. The transformation of regional sub-styles of Lao Hmong dress into a cohesive Hmong American ethnic style by these teens captures their role in community as the transitional generation moving from Lao Hmong to Hmong American identity and using their dress traditions to mark that path.[36]

This practice of mixing the sub-styles together and wearing those of groups other than your own at New Year celebrations has been documented across the United States. Peterson in her dissertation commented that "there are not very many Green Hmong families in Philadelphia, but almost every family with daughters owns a Green Hmong skirt–particularly if it is made in the new style."[37] In Missoula, Montana, Susan Lindbergh's research compared how Hmong American girls dress for the New Year with the way their mothers dressed in Laos. She reported that while mothers wore that dress of their subgroup, their Hmong American daughters each owned costumes "representative of at least two, if not three, different subgroups … . Wealthy girls may wear a different costume for each night of the New Year celebration to display their riches. Frequently subgroup garments are mixed, creating a hybrid costume."[38] This style impulse was also documented at the Sheboygan, Wisconsin Hmong New Year festivals.[39]

Other Asian American immigrant examples following these patterns include the cheongsam, a one-piece dress style that was a popular urban Chinese women's style from the 1920s to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Under Mao's rule this popular dress style of the Chinese middle and upper class was strictly forbidden on the mainland but continued to be worn as daily dress in Hong Kong and Taiwan until the late 1960s. Style characteristics of the cheongsam cited include "a mandarin collar, an asymmetric closure extending from the neckline to the underarm on the right side, frog buttons, slits on one or both sides, piping effect on the edges, and a fitted silhouette."[40] Similar to Lao Hmong traditional dress, the cheongsam evolved into festival and wedding dress in the immigrant Chinese community in the United States, later being worn as a national marker of Chinese culture and tradition more generally for ceremonial occasions.[41] A second example is the hanbok, the traditional dress of Korea. The hanbok is made up of an upper and lower garment, with both men and women wearing an upper jacket. The lower garment is either pants for men or a skirt for women. Hanbok was worn early in the immigration period for those adjusting to relocation and change, but continues now to be worn to bring family history into life-changing events.[42] Finally, Chinese hanfu robes, a wrapped garment style, either short or long, that emerged as popular on the Chinese mainland after the liberation of its economy and first arriving with Chinese immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century, are most typically still worn for special occasions, particularly weddings, in the United States.[43]

Marker of Dissonance, Political Stance, and Empowerment

With the peaking of national identity issues linked to immigration, race, and religious affiliation in Europe in the twenty-first century, dress became a center stage issue as it was used by both immigrant groups and nations to mark the immigration battleground, expressing the dissonance between the two cohabitating cultural groups. The veiling of the head and chest, the wearing of a hijab, and the related covering of the body by a burqa or chador by Muslim women became highly charged politically in France and to a lesser extent in other countries after the United States 9/11 terrorist attack. The dress styles, while linked by those outside of the Muslim community to religion, also became associated with national identities in conflict with Western countries. In 2011, France became the first European country to ban the wearing of a full body veil. As reported in the *New York Times* the law was passed to repress radicalism and curb Muslim separatism. The article reported that polls indicated wide support for the banning law in France, going beyond the center-right party known for its generalized fear of Islam. President Nicolas Sarkozy, speaking for this political position in France during this period, argued that the passage of the law was necessary to maintain separation of church and state as well as broader French values.[44]

The passage of the French banning law, while often understood by the public as a direct result of 9/11, has a much deeper history dating back to the colonial period, as referenced earlier in this chapter where colonizers imposed their views of dress upon the Indigenous populations. In the 1950s and 1960s as a part of the Algerian War, French soldiers forced Muslim women to unveil, resulting in the *New York Times Magazine* labeling the conflict the "Battle of the Veil" in 1958.[45] The French used social progression and modernization as an argument to support their action, but were unpersuasive to those affected:

> It can be argued that those measures [forced unveiling of Algerian women] were intended to modernize Algeria to match the colonists' taste; but Algerians, as do all nationalist Arabs, considered them tactics to undermine cultural roots.[46]

The French continued to use a modernization and social progression to justify their efforts to shut down the use of the hijab in the twenty-first century. Patrick Weil, in his book documenting the evolution of policies governing becoming a naturalized citizen of France, uses the example of the denial of citizenship to a Moroccan woman in 2008 based on her insistence on wearing a veil to illustrate the growing reliance on visible proof of assimilation as a criterion for naturalization. He dates this growing trend back to the 1970s, related to the rise of the French foreign-born population to 10.7 percent of the total, a number higher than the European average but about the same as in the United States. During this period, immigrants brought into France from former colonies in north and west Africa to do menial labor decided to remain and began to dramatically change the composition of the French population. In a defensive response France began to change its naturalization policies. This led to the ruling denying naturalization to Faiza Silmi, who had lived in France for eight years as the wife of a French citizen and who had four children who were by birth French citizens, based on her adoption of "a radical practice of her religion incompatible with the essential values of the French community and notably with the principle of equality between the sexes."[47]

The politicization of the hijab and burqa has a long history in Europe, affecting many countries and is often used to demonstrate allegiance to an ideological stance at a moment of crisis. For example, in 2016 Angela Merkel also proposed a ban of the hijab at the convention marking her acceptance of her party's nomination for another four-year term. In the *New York Times*, Alison Smale argued that Merkel, who was facing criticism for her open refugee policy in Germany, was attempting to use the ban symbolically to mark her hardening stance on migration into her country:

> In welcoming nearly one million asylum seekers to Germany a year ago, Ms. Merkel emerged as a powerful voice for tolerance across a Europe gripped by anxiety over waves of arriving migrants and fears of terrorism.

> Now, as anti-immigrant parties have advanced at the expense of mainstream parties, including her own, Ms. Merkel tried a tricky balancing act between holding fast to Western values and tilting farther right to avoid being outflanked by populist challengers.[48]

African Diaspora and Indigenous Dress as Identity

Textiles and dress can also be used as an identity-linked empowerment tool for groups either seeking national recognition for their country and/or a link back to their country of origin. Kente cloth, the common marketing name for a handwoven traditional strip-woven fabric from West Africa, has had an international voice in terms of symbolizing deeply rooted identity-linked political and social issues connected to nationalism and regionalism. The origins of the textile are traced back to the Ashante in Southern Ghana and the Ewe from the border of Ghana and Togo. "Kente" is not an internal traditional term for the textile. Instead, it is commonly associated with a third ethnolinguistic group, the Fante, who used the term to refer to the handwoven textiles they bought from the Ashante to resell to outside markets. In current broader usage kente refers to a wide range of both handwoven and printed textiles and products carrying the strip woven patterns of West African origin.

Linkages between the nation of Ghana and kente date back to 1957, when Kwame Nkrumah became the newly independent country's first president. A strong proponent of Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah wore it often in public and international settings. Of special note President Nkrumah was dressed in kente cloth during his formal visits to the United Nations in 1958 and 1960. Photographs of his visit captured the kente cloth and linked it in the minds of African Americans to their West African heritage. Nkrumah cemented the connection between Ghana and kente with a gift of the cloth to the United Nations, which is still on display in the lobby of the General Assembly. The son of the original weaver, Kwasi Asare, made a replacement for the original piece in 1995, which is still displayed at the United Nations in New York City. Also in this period, W.E.B. DuBois, the well-known writer of *The Souls of Black Folks*, wore a kente academic gown when he received an honorary degree from the University of Ghana in 1963. Muhammad Ali followed this by wearing kente for his visit to Africa in 1964. Harlem shops in New York City soon picked up the textile as a symbolic link to West African heritage for African American blacks, serving to popularize the identity symbol in the Black community.[49]

Despite a 1985 copyright law by the government of Ghana, kente textile designs continued to be used as a symbol of West African identity and roots, rather than a narrower national identity for the country of Ghana. This broader meaning was reinforced by a gift of kente to Michael Jackson when he was crowned prince of the Kingdom of Sanwi (Ivory Coast) in 1992 and the wearing of kente cloth by Hillary and Bill Clinton during a 1998 visit to Africa. Kente graduation sashes began to be commonly used at colleges and universities across the United States for Black students. Kente entered the national stage again in 2020 during the summer of protests and activism following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Online discussion and controversy erupted when photographs of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer wearing kente cloth given to them by the Black Congressional Caucus were released to the public.[50] Their spoken intent was to show solidarity with those protesting the murder while they were unveiling proposed police reform legislation but a National Public Radio story picked up on the fact that writers from widely circulated news outlets criticized their actions:

> Doreen St. Felix of *The New Yorker* called the photo-op 'outright mockery,' while Robin Givhan of *The Washington Post* noted that it "muddied the current conversation about race" by creating a distraction from the real issue: the history of racist police violence in the United States.[51]

While much of the use of kente design patterns are at lower levels of mass marketed product, with some made in China, high level design houses have also been involved. The discussion of appropriation of Ghanaian culture by the Paris design house Louis Vuitton erupted in April 2021, when Virgil Abloh's 2021 Fall-Winter men's collection included some Kente inspired designs. Some supported Abloh's work, arguing that as an artistic director of a famous fashion house he should be able to use his Ghanaian origins to express his own culture and his own African identity. Others felt the design house was not financially directly linked to the country of Ghana, and was therefore appropriating the history and art of kente for their own profit. The collection received great attention when Amanda Gorman, the African American poet who spoke at Joe Biden's inauguration, was pictured wearing a Louis Vuitton kente design on the May 2021 cover of *Vogue Magazine*.

American Indigenous groups also face challenges in terms of communicating regional and national identity. Similar to the case study of kente cloth outlined above, Indigenous populations often do not conform to popularly understood external national boundary lines. As an example, there are 574 federally recognized Indian Nations within the national boundary lines of the United States, 299 located in Alaska and the remainder located in 35 other states. These Indigenous groups identify themselves as Nations, however these national boundary lines are rarely understood or recognized by those outside of the community. In part as a reaction to this lack of formal outside recognition, in many cases textiles and dress are often used as visible symbols of self-defined national identity. For example, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma has an official proclamation declaring the Cherokee Tear Dress as the official national women's dress of their group. The website of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma lists the required specifications to meet the requirements:

> All pieces of the dress must be made of squares and rectangles; The bodice must be gathered onto a shoulder yoke and open up the front. There must be square gussets under the arms where the sleeves attach to the bodice. There must be a stand-up ruffle where the lower bodice and sleeve are attached to the yoke and where the skirt flounce is attached to the upper skirt panels. There must be decorative fabric bands at certain places on the dress, which are over each shoulder of the yoke, around each sleeve, and around the upper shirt just above the flounce.[52]

In other cases, such as the well-known woven textile patterns associated with the Diné (sometimes known as the southwestern Navajo Nation), the symbolism captures the producing Nation but also ends up as a more generalized identity symbol of Native American cultural groups to the dominant white cultural group of the United States. Some identity dress is passed between Indigenous groups less affected by white cultural influence, such as the use of jingle dress regalia at powwow celebrations, marking proud Indigenous tradition with less capitalist influence.

As world technology continues to bring different cultural groups into contact with one another, either through conflict, immigration, diplomacy, or exchange, regional cultural dress takes on meaning in a variety of contexts. Much of the tension and conflict was heaped upon the world by European and white dominated nation-states which used their technology to increase their resources in land, minerals, and people. Regional dress evolved to represent larger European nation-states, such as the national costumes of countries of the world—e.g., Breton dress for France or Hinderloopen for the Netherlands. As the wealthy classes in European and European dominated nations wore an increasingly similar style because of their ability to pass dress ideas around more quickly due to technology, the nationalistic and empire-building fervor of the nineteenth century created a demand for dress that set each country apart. They turned to their once isolated regions for ethnic peasant dress to create an ideal "costume" to represent their country.

When European and Western countries conquered non-white and non-European cultures, Western middle- and upper-class dress symbolized conforming to the Western lifestyle brought by the conquerors. Regional dress evolved in this environment to express identity for ethnic and cultural groups that were absorbed by a dominant nation or culture. Using dress from their cultural past, such as the dohti in India, the hula dress in Hawaii, or the tear dress within the Cherokee Nation, expresses the revival of their power to maintain their culture and traditions within the dominant culture. In some situations this results in a national independence, as in India, but often it is an opening of acceptance of the various cultures within a nation-state rather than allowing them full sovereignty. Other groups whose identities were erased upon contact with white invasion and kidnapping, have more recently used dress to express their group solidarity, including Black communities with kente cloth or Indigenous nations within the United States borders reclaiming their erased heritage.

Economic situations, war, and environmental changes have gone hand in hand with transportation technology that has made it easier for very different cultural groups to migrate around the world. Expressing an immigrant ethnic group's solidarity in a new country and culture, such as the Chinese or Hmong in the United States, is a way that specific ethnic dress is used. Much of the idea of dress being classified and used to indicate very specific ethnic groups seems to be heavily influenced by the European and Western interest in classification in the nineteenth century. What other cultures may have considered their everyday dress, Western cultures viewed as inferior or inappropriate rather than being garments appropriately adapted to a way of life where those cultures evolved. These interactions between dominant and less dominant cultures appear to ebb and flow throughout recent history with textiles, dress, and appearance continuing to create a significant form of visual identity for groups, empowering them to self-define who they are at a glance in relation to others within the world.

Notes

1 As defined in the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosopy:* a political ideology that centered on an individual and their individual rights, with equality of treatment by their government and freedom to express themselves without fear of reprisal and freedom from being forced to go against their beliefs or face punishment.

2 Lou Taylor's *Establishing Dress History* shows that the study of ethnography, international expositions, and museums of culture were happening at the same time, though this conclusion is not stated explicitly. Taylor does state that the display of peasant and regional dress was happening at the same time nationalism and imperialism was on the rise in Europe from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century and used those type of dress to bolster nationalistic aims or boast of imperialist might.
3 Auerbach, *Great Exhibition*, 60.
4 Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 200–205.
5 Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 236. Rydell argues that exhibits of exotic peoples were to establish a hierarchy among the races. Also see Blanchard, Boëtsch, and Snoep's exhibition catalog for *Exhibitions. L'invention du sauvage,* which was on display at the Museé du quai Branly from November 2011 to June 2012. This exhibition catalog is one in a series of journal articles and exhibitions between 2000 and 2021 that Pascal Blanchard and several other colleagues continue to present academically to shed light on the colonial mindset which created hierarchies of race and "Othering" out of the African, Asian, Pacific Island and North and South American peoples Western nations colonized and conquered.
6 Taylor, *Establishing Dress History,* 205–206.
7 Taylor, *Establishing Dress History,* 206–207.
8 Taylor, *Establishing Dress History,* 210–217.
9 Brzyski, "Paradox," 282–284.
10 Dabrowski, "'Discovering' Galician Borderlands," 386–388.
11 Chapter 5: The Hutsul Region and the Hand of Civilization in Patrice Dabrowski's *The Carpathians: Discovering the Highlands of Poland and Ukraine* is an expansion on Dabrowski's article in the *Slavic Review* with additional information about the use of Hutsul regional dress as an expression of Ukrainian nationalism.
12 Balme, "Dressing the Hula," 252.
13 Balme, "Dressing the Hula," 252.
14 Balme, "Dressing the Hula," 233–255.
15 Schorman, "'Remember the Maine,'" 119–135.
16 Eriksen, "Bunad."
17 Eriksen, "Keeping the Recipe," 26.
18 Eriksen, "Keeping the Recipe," 29.
19 Eriksen, "Keeping the Recipe," 29–30.
20 Eriksen, "Bunad."
21 Van Haaften, "Nehru Jacket," 210–211.
22 Prasad, "Struggle to Represent," 572–588.
23 Paulicelli, "Fashion, Politics of Style and National Identity," 537.
24 Paulicelli, "Fashion, Politics of Style and National Identity," 542.
25 Johnson, "Fashion Under the Swastika," Article 1.
26 Hagan-Jurkowitsch, "Dirndl," 99–101.
27 Wu, "Mao Suit,"191–193.
28 Li, "Uniformed Rebellion," 439–470.
29 Sarna, "From Immigrants to Ethnics," 370–378.
30 Geddes, *Migrants of the Mountains*.
31 Peterson, "From the Heart and Mind," 118.
32 Lynch, "Hmong American New Year's Dress," Female Interview Number 1.
33 Lynch, "Hmong American New Year's Dress," Female Interview Number 5.
34 DuBois, *Costuming,* 218.
35 Bodnar in *The Transplanted* discusses these specific nineteenth-century immigrant celebrations.
36 Lynch, *Dress, Gender, and Cultural Change.*
37 Peterson, "From the Heart and Mind," 94.
38 Lindbergh, "Traditional Costumes," 45.
39 Cubbs, *Hmong Art*.
40 Wu, "Cheongsam," 71.
41 Wu, "Cheongsam," 71–72.
42 Geczy, "Hanbok," 133–135.

43 Evenson, "Hanfu Chinese Robes," 135–136.
44 Erlanger, "France Enforces Veils."
45 Lehrman, "Battle of the Veil in Algeria," 14–18. See also Geczy's "Hijab" in *Ethnic Dress in the United States* and El Guindi's *Veil*.
46 El Guindi, *Veil*, 170.
47 Clark-Flory, "Veil vs. French Values."
48 Smale, "Angela Merkel Calls for Ban."
49 Strubal, "Kente Cloth," 174–177.
50 BBC News, "U.S. Democrats Wearing Kente Cloth?"
51 Gomez Sarmiento, "Kente Cloth."
52 The People's Path, "Cherokee Tear Dress Facts."

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8 Between Benevolent Work and Militant Labor

Palestinian Embroidery in the Diaspora

Toufoul Abou-Hodeib

Today, Palestinian embroidery, in the form of women's dresses and smaller consumer items, has its established place in the Palestinian national imaginary as well as in transnational representations of Palestine. In the 1960s, however, the immediate connection between this type of embroidery and a Palestinian national identity was not a given. On the one hand, embroidered dresses were being subsumed under ethnographic collections—such as that of the British Museum—with an interest in documenting a peasant culture regarded as rapidly disappearing in the face of modernity. On the other hand, a budding Israeli nation was also laying claim to these dresses as part of its own historical narrative. Yet, by the 1980s, within a relatively short period of time, an increasingly assertive Palestinian nationalism was already well on its way in establishing these embroidered dresses as iconic of a Palestinian identity. By looking at the role of the Palestinian diaspora in Lebanon in this transformation, this chapter argues that the process of establishing embroidery as Palestinian, took place through various projects revolving around two different conceptions of labor: the benevolent and the militant. Although at tension with each other, these conceptions of labor placed embroidery within a field of transnational political contestation, and consequently positioned embroidery as a showcase of authentic Palestinian identity.

Recent works offer rich insights into the globalization of the manufacturing of fashion and dress in terms of consumption, but also production, beyond the Euroamerican context. These show how understanding fashion and dress, including those we typically think of "European" or "Western," entails unraveling how not only processes of consumption, but also of production cut across geographies.[1] Works along this vein also bring to our attention issues of labor exploitation and sustainability when it comes to the production of fashion and dress, highlighting how labor and environmental concerns necessitate tying in "the Global South" into any broader understanding of fashion and garment production.[2] At the same time, there is a rich body of work, especially from the field of anthropology, that turns our attention to another kind of politics in the production of fashion and dress, namely that of representation. It explore how dress communicates identity and status, but also becomes deeply political in geographies typically regarded as sources of cheap labor for the global industry. Such works highlight the agency of consumers outside the Euroamerican context in giving meaning to their dress practices.[3]

Despite these valuable insights on the politics of labor and production, on the one hand, and the politics of representation, on the other, the relationship between the two is not sufficiently addressed in the existing body of literature. Works on material culture more generally, emphasize the interrelatedness of the two, showing how the materiality

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of production both enables and cuts off potentialities for representation.[4] Some works from the field of anthropology, such as those of Pravina Shukla and Blenda Femenías, also show the fruitfulness of exploring chains of both production and consumption in understanding how dress and adornment communicate status and identity.[5] In the case of political identities, stress often lays on the powerful representative capacities of dress, but exploring relations of production in addition, as I argue, can contribute to informing what we mean by "labor" and how it emerges in the context of different ideological projects.

This chapter looks at how production actively contributed to propagating a Palestinian political identity, and how production, rather than just consumption, became part of the representation of what it is to be Palestinian on a transnational level. Focusing on local processes of labor and their role in generating Palestinian liberation politics and identity, I aim not only to forefront Palestinian agency in the production of embroidery, but also to explore how material conditions of production, embedded as they were in transnational political ideologies and struggles over defining heritage, produced what became a global marker of Palestine and Palestinians. Based on oral interviews and official publications, the chapter shows how embroidery transformed from biblical representations to become one of the means for politically reconstituting Palestinian society in exile. This happened not only through symbolic means, but also through relations of labor that enabled the consolidation of embroidery as specifically Palestinian.

From Collecting to Manufacturing Embroidery

Early interest in embroidery as representation came under colonial forms of knowledge that placed archaeology, photography, and art in the service of recovering a biblical past.[6] In that same vein, early efforts at collecting and documenting embroidery in Palestine conflated the inhabitants of the "Holy Land" with figures from biblical times. Frozen in time, the men, women, and children inhabiting the land became living testimony of past biblical lives, and every detail of their everyday existence mattered as clues to imagining a Judeo-Christian past. Not surprisingly, thus, some of the earliest collections of embroidered costumes from Palestine were assembled by missionaries. Particularly The Church Missionary Society and the Jerusalem and the East Mission built up extensive collections during the 1880s. These costumes were brought back to England and put on exhibition for fundraising purposes.[7] Other collections included those of John Whiting (1882–1951) of the American Colony in Jerusalem, who collected costumes before World War I, and of Florence Dibell Bartlett, a wealthy Chicago heiress who acquired the costumes during her travels in 1921 from the American Colony store with the help of the Whitings.[8]

The symbolic import of embroidered dresses as living testimony to a biblical past made also inroads into the artistic domain. The Pre-Raphaelite English painter William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), for example, collected costumes in order to use in his paintings of the Holy Land. One of his most notable works, "The Triumph of the Innocents," started during the artist's sojourn in Palestine, features a Joseph and Mary dressed in Palestinian garb drawing on the artist's observation during a trip to Gaza in 1870.[9] The late-nineteenth century interest in Palestinian embroidery was taking place at a time when Islamic art was appearing in World Fairs in Europe and the United States as artistic production appreciated for its formalistic qualities, divorced from the actual social background to its production.[10] With their geometric designs, costumes enjoyed a similar appeal, even as they served both missionaries and artists such as the Raphaelite Hunt as markers of authenticity.

There was also a commercial side to this Biblical romanticism, one that soon moved the interest in embroidered costumes from mere collection to production. Missionaries took a leading role here as well, encouraging centers for embroidery that catered primarily to tourists and pilgrims to holy shrines. In addition to the Vester & Co.—American Colony Store in Jerusalem, the German missions in Ramallah and Bethlehem and the Russian missions in Nazareth and Bayt Jala also engaged in such commercial endeavors.[11]

After World War I, Palestine became officially a mandate state, placed under British rule. In the interwar years, early interest in embroidery was transformed by new relations of production that, in the eyes of collectors and researchers, threatened its authenticity. Locals adopted means of producing embroidery that transformed it both in terms of style and production. Machine-produced textiles and mercerized cotton threads replaced tailoring and silk threads in the 1930s. The main manufacturer of the threads used in embroidery was the French Dollfus-Mieg and Company, known until today as DMC. Once perceived by folklorists and Biblical scholars alike as relatively immune to the forces of change, the countryside did not escape these changes. The pattern books produced by DMC circulated amongst village women, transforming not only the material used for embroidery, but also their forms, with the introduction of German, Balkan, and Scandinavian patterns and designs. New technologies also impacted production on a larger scale. In weaving, machines replaced handlooms in producing textiles that formed the base for needlework. In Majdal, which was a center for weaving located in southwest Palestine, there were about 400 looms in the 1930s, and there were also factories in Nazareth, Ramallah, Nablus, and Safad. In those, too, European style embroidery was becoming widespread. The "Hishmeh" factory in Ramallah, for example, trained women to embroider scarves in the decorative floral patterns popular in Europe at the time, reducing the use of the cross-stitch embroidered head scarf (*khirqa*).[12]

At the same time that Palestinian embroidery appeared to be losing its "traditional" aspects, it was witnessing another kind of revival elsewhere. Both colonial officials and missionary educators feared the loss of authenticity of the native craft.[13] William Arnold Stewart, the director of Technical Education under the Mandate starting in 1930, regarded textile education and the promotion of traditional costumes as a vital social project, and insisted on the cultivation of local weaving industries. His proposal to found a Folk Museum for Palestine dovetailed with both nationalist and colonialist interests at the time. As a non-governmental, private institution, the museum's donations and maintenance came from Arab and Jewish donors, both in Palestine and abroad, and it was run with the help of volunteers, primarily the wives of British bureaucrats in Palestine.[14] As a sign of the value embroidery enjoyed by the time as representative of folk culture, the core of the Museum's collection was embroidered textiles gathered from across Palestine. In line with the British Mandate's vision of the cultural unity of Palestine's population, costumes from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities were meant to reflect the country's ethnoreligious diversity.[15]

Simultaneously, local educators also looked to embroidery as a repository of authenticity, one linked to the nationalist discourse. To some, embroidery and sewing became part of the sociocultural territory where differentiation between a localized authenticity characterized by simplicity and beauty contrasted with the variety and changing fashions viewed as typical of the West.[16] As a result of this interest, embroidery was taught at most government schools in Palestine and several embroidery and sewing workshops opened especially after the heightening of nationalist sentiments in the late 1930s.[17] Initiated by women, these workshops became the point of entry for women into the political sphere and the labor market. While changes in local practices of production did not quite conform to the posited authenticity of the early collections, they point to a development during the late 1930s where embroidery's national symbolism went hand-in-hand with its appropriation and transformation through production. This challenged what was regarded as authentic embroidery and placed it squarely in terms of mechanization and styles in a living present open to global influxes as well as to societal transformations.

The destruction of Palestinian society and homeland in 1948, referred to in Arabic as the Nakba (catastrophe) put a stop to much of this activity as it did to many other aspects of Palestinian society and culture.[18] If hand-embroidery was already losing ground to ready-mades and machine-production, the mass migrations and destitution dealt the severest blow yet to the time-consuming and more expensive process of embroidering by hand. In addition, many women were forced to part with their dresses in the aftermath of forced displacement. An embroidered dress was one of a woman's most prized possessions, usually acquired as part of the trousseau and worn only on special occasions. Many, therefore, took their dresses with them, only to find themselves having to sell them to collectors in order to ameliorate the economic situation for themselves and their families.[19]

For these various reasons, by the 1960s, traditional embroidered costumes were becoming less common among Palestinians themselves. During her first research trip in Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza on behalf of the British Museum in 1967, Shelagh Weir noted that a lot of the dresses and ornamentation that were still popular in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century were mostly abandoned. It was mostly older women who still kept up the tradition, in addition to specific groups, notably in Hebron and by the Bedouins of Upper Galilee. Whereas Gaza still had a variety of embroidered dresses, most notably due to the 1948 refugee influx from Jaffa, Weir describes their designs as "garish" and "in the Western style," to distinguish them from the ones in the Museum's possession.[20] Notwithstanding Weir's judgment, new aesthetic preferences and mechanized production were having a visible impact on the styles and fashions of the time. Yet, even as that happened, a different kind of life was blown into embroidery in the context of the Palestinian national movement.

Defining Embroidery, Claiming Heritage

The intersection of many threads of interest in folklore also produced tensions around it as a field. Its definition, collection, and reproduction became fraught with political significance in the 1970s. The year 1967 was a catalyst in many ways. Although mostly discussed in terms of its political import, and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel after the Six-Day War, 1967 also had a specific significance for embroidery, paradoxically invigorated by the renewed plight and impoverishment of yet another section of the Palestinian population. Private and institutional collectors alike became interested in documenting what was perceived as an aspect of culture that was rapidly disappearing in the face of modernization and life in refugee camps.[21] It was with these considerations in mind that curator Shelagh Weir was sent on behalf of the British Museum to conduct research in the Levant in 1967 and fill in gaps in the Museum's collection, resulting in the 1970 publication of *Palestinian Embroidery: A Village Arab Craft*.

Despite the national symbolic import that embroidery held for Palestinians, embroidery in Weir's book was presented as totally detached from any claims to Palestinian national identity. Although the map in the book does not delineate the state of Palestine as such, the costumes in the book are located in a region called "Palestine," stretching on the map north-south from the border with Lebanon to the Sinai Desert and west-east from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan. The needlework itself, however, was not attributed to "Palestinians," but rather to "the *fellaheen* [peasant] women of Palestine."[22] In other words, whereas the geography of Palestine is made manifest through the costumes and their regional provenance, it is not attached to any particular nation. It was only the costumes and the land that were "Palestinian," not the people.

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza also ushered in an aggressive attempt at appropriating embroidery into the Israeli national narrative. Israeli collectors joined the rush of collecting Palestinian costumes in the wake of the 1967 war. Ruth Dayan, wife of Israeli general and politician Moshe Dayan, was one of those collectors. Dayan had founded Maskit fashion house in Israel in 1954 in order to provide employment to impoverished Jewish immigrants and utilize the craftsmanship they had brought with them from various parts of the world. Her 1974 book, *Crafts of Israel*, blurs the line between folkloric elements produced by craftsmen and the products of Maskit, underlining traditional designs' continuity in modern Israeli fashion.[23] The book features photos of embroidered dresses from the Palestinian town of Bethlehem, and Dayan explicitly says: "As soon as it was practically possible after the Six Day War of 1967, the crafts of the area administered by Israel, where there were a large number of Arab workers, were incorporated into the framework of Maskit."[24] This incorporation of Palestinian embroidery in Israeli history also manifested itself in official institutions of the state, specifically the Ethnographic Department of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Just a few years after Dayan's book came out, the museum published in 1977 an English-language book, *Arabesque*, featuring the Palestinian costumes in its collection.

In neither Dayan's nor the Israel Museum's publication does the word "Palestine" appear once. Featuring on its very first page a photograph of a Palestinian woman embroidering, *Arabesque* uses "Holy Land," "Arab," and "Bedouin" to describe the identity of the people behind the craft. The book's historical references are to biblical and Byzantine heritage as precursors and influence. Even when citing the importance of Ottoman influences, the latter is reduced to its Byzantine inheritance.[25] In other words, the entire history of embroidery is dissociated from the women still practicing it and collapsed onto a distant past that elides entire centuries. Historically, these traditions were placed in Jewish and Byzantine history, while Islam was regarded in terms of a mere influence of the two.[26] Most significantly, drawing on this wealth of traditions, including Palestinian, Maskit marketed itself as a fashion house and produced for an international market, with a showroom and wholesale room on 55 West Fifty-fifth Street in New York.[27]

This happened at a time when the Palestinian national movement was in full swing and enjoyed large popular support both in the occupied territories and in exile. Several Palestinians at the time reacted to seeing symbols of Palestinian culture displayed as

Israeli fashion. Inea Bushnaq, a Palestinian-American folklorist living in New York since 1967, remembers seeing Palestinian costumes appearing for sale in New York stores with "Made in Israel" labels.[28] Leila Khaled of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, recounts that during a women's conference in Berlin in 1975, the Israeli delegation showed up in traditional Palestinian costumes. Provoked, the entire Palestinian delegation donned similar robes of their own, in addition to the iconic, black-and-white checkered scarf, *kaffiye*.[29] A publication of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) institution SAMED, highlights how loaded the field of folklore, including embroidery, had become in the 1970s. In an issue dedicated to heritage in 1978, Palestinian heritage is seen as "part of our civilizational struggle with the Zionist enemy, and the protection and development of this heritage is a militant task [muhimma nidaliyya] for which our people and our masses are responsible."[30] This matter also received attention in the PLO's English-language publication, *Palestine*, which was meant for international circulation, especially among solidarity movements in Europe. What was at stake, according to the publication, was not just denial of Palestinian culture, but also its theft and appropriation in the form of archaeology and handicrafts. If the "hobby archaeologist" Moshe Dayan was deemed responsible for the first, his ex-wife, Ruth Dayan, symbolized the second.[31]

Significantly, whereas organizations such as Maskit placed embroidery within a Judeo-Christian historical context, for Palestinians, it was the Byzantine and Umayyad heritage that mattered: "Arab culture with some special Byzantine influence."[32] Whereas Maskit's historic grounding was congruent with its market of Jewish and Christian buyers, for the PLO, its "market" corresponded to a cultural identity of a Palestine composed of Muslims and Christians, particularly Greek Orthodox Christians. SAMED equates denying that history with denying Palestinians as a people, and thus the preservation of culture and crafts was "not only a matter of cultivating and expressing their historic identity, but also an important form and part in the struggle of resistance against the decades long annihilation campaign of Zionism."[33] In terms of production, this struggle for Palestinian national definition through embroidery took two forms: NGO-ization through the discourse of benevolence; and militant labor within the PLO's larger economic project.

Embroidery as benevolent Work

The majority of the Palestinian refugees living in the camps of Lebanon came from a rural background. While many avenues of labor remained closed to women during the Mandate period, women's work was far from frowned upon in the countryside. As part of the family unit, they participated in agriculture, tending farm animals, and the production and selling of food products.[34] In addition, urban women of different classes were finding new avenues of work. For middle- and upper-class women, involvement in social welfare and benevolent societies constituted an avenue into the public sphere and, in the case of the women's movement, into nationalist politics.[35] As for less well-off Palestinian women, many found a place as laborers in the burgeoning textile manufacture.[36] Following the Nakba, these forms of work were either diminished or completely cut off for the inhabitants of refugee camps in Lebanon. Not only were former avenues of female employment closed to the rural women who had lost their contact with the land, but it was difficult to find new ones both because of societal restrictions on female work and, more generally, because of the difficulties Palestinians faced on the Lebanese labor market. This motivated several endeavors specifically directed at activating women's economic potential in the camps through embroidery projects.

The Lebanese Society for the Resuscitation of Palestinian Camps (INAASH), the first institution to begin organized embroidery production in Lebanon, shows how aspects of women's work was activated in the diaspora both as upper-class welfare and as camp labor.[37] The story, as told by Sima Ghandur (née Tuqan), who has been with the society since its inception, was that shortly following the 1967 war, a group of Palestinian women were approached by Huguette Caland, daughter of Lebanon's first president, Bechara El Khoury (1943–1952), at a society event. Wishing to do something for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Caland had suggested training women in European-style embroidery, at which Ghandur suggested that they train the women in something more authentically Palestinian.[38] Thus, INAASH was born, with Caland as president. This origin story notwithstanding, the idea was to create work opportunities for poor women in the refugee camps in order to provide them with an income and a degree of economic independence. Although registered as a Lebanese non-profit organization, INAASH was run by Palestinian women living in Lebanon, and after the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the ensuing expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon, Caland withdrew completely from the endeavor.[39]

The initial exposure of many of these urban, upper-class women to embroidery had been as children and young women in Mandate Palestine. Although embroidery was taught in schools, the teaching of traditional Palestinian embroidery at private schools attended by upper-class Palestinian girls was not common. The Friends School in Ramallah, attended by the collector Widad Kawar as well as by two founders of the embroidery organization INAASH in Beirut, Serene Shahid and Wadad `Abd al-Rahim, daughters of notable politician Jamal al-Husayni, did not teach embroidery, neither did the Sisters of Saint Joseph school in Jaffa, attended by INAASH's Haifa Bibi, who has been training women in embroidery since 1970.[40] These women's recollections of the characteristic Palestinian embroidery came primarily from observing the clothes of rural women who either worked as domestic help in urban homes or visited the cities and towns on market days to sell their wares and produce.[41] Some of the collectors, such as Widad Kawar, had started buying costumes from refugees after the Nakba.[42]

In order to supervise the production of embroidery, INAASH started centers near refugee camps to train women in needlework. The Palestinian women who oversaw the work in the 1970s traveled regularly from their homes to the locations rented by the society at refugee camps in Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, and the Beqa` Valley. There, women from the camps would bring their finished pieces, be paid, and receive new commissions.[43] These embroidery centers, often attached to kindergartens, constituted daily points of contact between Palestinian women from different classes, who inhabited different societal worlds in Lebanon and would have had little chance of meeting otherwise. Altogether, INAASH had a workforce of over 1,000 women on the eve of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Although marketed as "traditional," INAASH's embroidery was transformed by its market both in terms of design and production. Production catered to the homes of the middle and upper class, those who, according to Caland, would appreciate the intricacies of embroidered handwork. Due to its reputation for producing the finest quality of Palestinian embroidery, INAASH developed an international reputation, and its products remained the most expensive compared to other organizations producing embroidery at the time.[44] The choice of designs was influenced by the aesthetical considerations INAASH expected in its market in the late 1960s and the 1970s. In addition to producing dresses, the society produced items for the home, such as cushions and table runners. Further, the designs introduced colors not commonly used in embroidered dresses, such as yellow, beige, brown, and fuchsia, and combined in the same product different motifs copied from old dresses coming from different regions of Palestine. The design and production were separated through the practice of "piece work," where the women were paid per finished piece. Rather than producing entire embroidered pieces, embroidering women were commissioned work on smaller pieces, which were later sewn together into finished products by INAASH.[45] This separated the women working from their homes in the camp from the final product and introduced a commercial value to it. This stood in stark contrast to how embroidered dresses were produced in Palestinian villages, where the embroidered items and the embroiderer had a more intimate relationship. Girls started embroidering items, including dresses, for the wedding trousseau at an early age, and the personality of the embroiderer was seen to come into expression in her design choices and workmanship.[46]

Other organizations working along the same developmental lines as INAASH had more direct links to political organizations. The General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), for example, was an official section of the PLO under its "Mass Organization Department." Founded in 1965, by 1982, it was established in eleven countries, with the largest membership in Lebanon (21,000) and Syria (18,000). With the same idea of training women in work that can be carried out from home, the Union operated more than 90 centers in refugee camps where women of all ages received vocational training.[47] By the end of the 1970s, the GUPW had trained five thousand women at their centers in needlework and embroidery and organized traveling exhibitions to market their products in Arab countries and in Europe through solidarity committees.[48] Like INAASH, the GUPW embroidery project had an international face, but its links were more political than societal, drawing support from the international solidarity movement built through both women's rights and the Palestinian cause.

As embroidery established itself as both women's labor and national heritage, other smaller organizations initiated their own embroidery projects. Most notable in this respect is the Lebanese Social Help Association (al-Najdeh). Founded in 1978, one of the association's principal aims is providing employment opportunities and vocational training to both Palestinians and Lebanese, especially women. Al-Najdeh's very first project, al-Badia, is an embroidery project aimed at employing widows after the massacre of Tall al-Zaatar refugee camp in August 1976, during the Lebanese Civil War.[49] Moving from that emergency measure to the broader goal of providing work for women in general, al-Najdeh started embroidery workshops in some of the most economically vulnerable areas of Beirut and South Lebanon: Damour and the camps of Shatila, `Ayn al-Hilweh, Rashidiyya, and Burj al-Shamali. While INAASH produced high-quality, expensive embroideries, al-Najdeh production concentrated on producing "new types of embroidery and applying designs to simple and relatively inexpensive gift products."[50] Like the GUPW, both endeavors' labor was structured around the idea of middle- and upper-class women empowering women from refugee camps by providing them with a source of income and autonomy, often in the absence of an adult male provider.[51]

Embroidery as Militant Labor

In tandem with these developments, the PLO had started to develop its own cultural projects, ones that tied more directly to revolutionary politics, and, eventually, to the institutions of an imagined future state. In the late 1960s, particularly after the defeat of 1967, one dominant form of political organization for Palestinian political parties emerged under the PLO first in Amman, then in Beirut, following the Black September showdown with the Jordanian regime in 1970–1971, and the relocation of the Palestinian resistance from Jordan to Lebanon.[52] Under the PLO, embroidery became part of that larger project for Palestinian labor. Although INAASH was the first to start an embroidery project in Beirut, it remained intentionally removed from the quagmire of Palestinian politics in Lebanon. Political institutions of the PLO, on the other hand, explicitly tied embroidery to a wider political vision of Palestinian labor.

It was through Palestine Martyrs' Works Society (SAMED) that the project of militant labor found its clearest expression. Initially established in Jordan around 1970, SAMED had its origins in similar attempts of other NGOs at providing a source of income in the absence of an adult male provider. In its early days, its main aim was providing vocational training to the orphans of men and women who had died for the Palestinian cause, but the organization expanded in the mid-1970s to start training and employing any Palestinian. Not long after it was founded, SAMED found itself forced to move its headquarters to Beirut together with the rest of the PLO's institutions after Black September. Lebanon presented a new set of challenges for Palestinians. Non-naturalized Palestinians received lower wages than Lebanese, were barred from certain professions, did not benefit from social security, and, due to this economic insecurity, faced difficulties in affording basic commodities.[53] In this new context, the PLO's social welfare activities and economic endeavors aimed at inducing a measure of self-finance for the PLO, vocational training in the camps, and economic self-reliance in Palestinian society in exile.[54] One of the goals of institutional reorganization in Lebanon, therefore, was to create a "Palestinian sector" capable of providing Palestinians with work and producing affordable commodities for their consumption. Exact figures are lacking, but by some estimates, this sector absorbed 65% of the Palestinian workforce on the eve of the 1982 collapse.[55]

As a result of the new direction SAMED was taking, an executive board was founded for the organization in the summer of 1972, and SAMED was separated from its progenitor, the Organization for Social Affairs and Welfare of the Sons of Martyrs and Prisoners, an organization under the main party in the PLO, Fateh.[56] SAMED became the PLO's economic arm, with ventures in the industrial and agricultural sectors, with economic activities that ranged from factories in refugee camps to agricultural cooperatives in Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Iraq. At the height of its production in 1982, before the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon, SAMED had forty-three factories in the country, with about five thousand employees. By that time, production had moved beyond providing affordable goods for Palestinian consumption, to exporting to the Soviet Union, the Gulf, and Eastern Europe.[57]

SAMED's embroidery projects started within that context in the early 1970s. According to Article 3 in the organization's bylaws, one of its seven aims was "Advertising the heritage of the Palestinian people, and prioritizing the costumes of this people at all fairs and occasions." Further, the means adopted towards accomplishing those aims included "[p]roducing and manufacturing all commodities with a folkloric Palestinian character."[58] But this preservation had a specific aim in a context where the Palestinians as a people have "not only been systematically ignored by Zionism, but [have] also been denied an identity and culture."[59] In several interviews published in

Palestine and *SAMED al-Iqtisadi*, the organization's official publication, Ahmad Quray` (Abu `Ala'), SAMED's director, explicitly links the focus on embroidery to the Palestinian Revolution. It was "the task of the Palestinian Resistance" to preserve Palestinian culture and arts. Armed struggle, in this context, was but one of many methods for achieving a new Palestinian society for a liberated Palestine, within its mandate borders.[60] In this connection, words attributed to the head of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, were often cited or paraphrased: "The Palestinian Revolution is not merely a rifle, but also a social, cultural, and industrial struggle [...]."[61]

During its decade in Lebanon, the organization established workshops in all Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and in some camps in Syria. These included workshops for sewing, embroidery, woodwork, wool spinning, and costumes.[62] Illustrating SAMED's very early interest in embroidery, the first workshop for full-time embroiderers was established in Beirut in 1971, followed by two workshops in the Beqa` Valley and in North Lebanon. Unlike the independent NGOs involved in embroidery, SAMED not only commissioned piece-work that was carried out at home, but also engaged full-time employees in its workshops in the camps.[63] Their numbers, however, remained limited. In 1981 the various workshops were employing 30 full-time women, in addition to the 3,000 working from home.[64] Although limited in scope, what was interesting about SAMED's workshops in general is that they were meant for both male and female employment, even when some labor such as embroidery remained gendered. The militant laborer in SAMED's schema defended the Revolution in her dual role as a worker who partakes in production and as a combatant who does not shy away from her military duties when called upon, whether by serving as a combatant or by producing for combatants. In that sense, women could be militant both as combatants as well as workers, and the revolutionary subjectivity that SAMED attempted to cultivate amongst its workers emphasized literacy, politics, technical skills, hygiene, and gender equality.[65]

As a way for mobilizing that identity transnationally, SAMED had permanent exhibitions in Lebanon, Libya, North Yemen, and Democratic Yemen in 1976, and by 1981 had opened new ones in Congo-Brazzaville as well as the Palestinian Commercial Center in Baghdad.[66] In addition, the institution participated in national and international trade fairs in the Eastern bloc as well as in Arab and Asian countries. At fairs in cities such as Leipzig, Plovdiv, Budapest, Bucharest, Baghdad, Casablanca, New Delhi, Karachi, Nairobi, Tripoli, Algiers, and Dar al-Salam, embroidered costumes occupied pride of place.[67] The trade fair at Leipzig was particularly important for SAMED. The fair received a yearly mention in both *Palestine* and *SAMED al-Iqtisadi*, often accompanied by photos of Erich Hoenecker, leader of the German Democratic Republic, visiting the Palestinian contribution to the fair. Embroidered dresses and items of clothing and accessories were displayed side by side with other products of SAMED's factories and workshops, such as readymade clothing, military uniforms, furniture, carpets, toys, and handicrafts.[68]

In its most developed form in 1982, SAMED's discourse posited the idealized worker as the nucleus of a Palestinian working class, as SAMED was also interested in establishing the economic nucleus for a future Palestinian state.[69] Folkloric products exhibited in international trade fairs took a heritage conceived of as unitary and essentially Palestinian, but mobilized it through the labor of the revolutionary subject. SAMED's products themselves reflected this. Embroideries were showcased side by side with *kufiyas*, military clothing and boots, and folkloric elements transposed onto modern bags and eyeglass cases. In the SAMED's world of revolutionary politics, embroidery was not merely preserved through the labor of the militant worker in exile, it was mobilized transnationally through economic fairs and its Arabic- and English-language publications as one of the most visible components of the economic backbone of a future Palestinian state.

Conclusion

Embroidered dress became Palestinian through two contexts of production in Lebanon, each revolving around its conception of Palestinian labor. The first, which could be described as an NGO-ization of Palestinian labor, was aimed specifically at women and aimed at providing them with work both as means of improving themselves and the society around them. While the recipients at the end of this benevolent work were women from Palestinian refugee camps, the providers were women from the middle and upper-middle classes, whose own conceptions of what was aesthetically valuable about embroidery guided to a large extent its final form and its transnational market of middle and upper-middle class buyers.

The other context of production was that of the PLO's SAMED and the ideas developed there about the place of the militant worker within a broader economic project of constructing the backbone of a future Palestinian state. Although the reality was that most women producing embroidery for SAMED ended up working from home, the labor was conceived of as militant "Palestinian" labor in general in which both men and women participated. In addition to being sold pretty much along the same lines of transnational solidarity and Palestinian exile as benevolent associations, embroidered dresses also appeared in economic fairs around the world, where they were exhibited side by side with other SAMED products. Together they served to highlight the PLO's presence in the world as a representative of Palestinian people, and indeed Palestinian labor.

Although the two projects of labor centering on embroidery—the benevolent and the militant—were in tension with each other, together, they ended up laying claim to Palestinian dress as uniquely Palestinian. As a field of cultural production and consumption, embroidery became one of the means for reconstituting Palestinian society in exile through its various components. Middle-class activists, refugee men and women, and upper-class women all became intertwined through various embroidery projects, shaping the form that embroidery dresses took and positing its use, production, and reproduction as an integral part of the affirmation of Palestinian identity.

Notes

1 See, for example, Maynard, *Dress and Globalisation*; Breward and Gilbert, *Fashion's World Cities*; Gökarıksel and Secor, "New Transnational Geographies of Islamism," Blaszczyk and Pouillard, *European Fashion*; Fuhg, "Cultural Renewal."

2 A lot is written on this topic. For some examples, see Whalen, "Sweatshops Here and There"; Crewe, "Ugly Beautiful?"; Fletcher and Tham, *Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion*; Appelbaum and Lichtenstein, *Achieving Workers' Rights*; Ashraf and Prentice, "Beyond Factory Safety."

3 For example, Root, *Couture and Consensus*; Hansen and Madison, *African Dress*; Tajali, "Women's Dress"; Yangzom, "Clothing and Social Movements"; Kutesko, *Fashioning Brazil*.

4 See, for example, Auslander, *Taste and Power*; and Abou-Hodeib, *A Taste for Home*.

5 Femenías, *Gender and the Boundaries of Dress*; Shukla, *Grace of Four Moons*. Another interesting work by Christina H. Moon, "Fashion City," explores how fashion contributes materially to the construction of new urban geographies.

6 See Davis, *Landscape of Belief*; Hallote, "Photography and the American Contribution"; Nassar "'Biblification' in the Service of Colonialism."
7 Weir, *Embroidery from Palestine*, 8.
8 Sumberg, *Textiles*, 14; Weir, "Traditional Costumes," 45.
9 Bronkhurst, "William Holman Hunt," 394. Hunt's collection of Palestinian costumes is now at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada.
10 See Troelenberg, *Eine Ausstellung wird besichtigt*, especially Chapter 4.
11 Nasir, "Traditional Palestinian Costume," 122; Bair, "American Colony Photography Department," 31.
12 Nasir, "Traditional Palestinian Costume," 122–123. Weir also notes that up to the end of the British Mandate, the wedding dresses of the rich townspeople of Bethlehem were woven in Majdal. Weir, "Traditional Costumes," 53.
13 Greenberg, "Invading Spaces," 68.
14 Ari, "Cultural Mandates," 38.
15 For more on the Palestine Folk Museum, see ibid., 203–214.
16 Greenberg, "Invading Spaces," 69. On a similar argument regarding tastes in early twentieth-century Beirut, see Abou-Hodeib, "Taste and Class in Late Ottoman Beirut."
17 On the General Strike, the "Great Revolt," and their nationalist importance in Palestinian history and memory, see Swedenberg, "Role of the Palestinian Peasantry" and *Memories of Revolt*; Anderson, "State Formation from Below."
18 On the effects of the Nakba (catastrophe) on Palestinians and Palestinian society and its long-term repercussions, see Manna', "Palestinian Nakba."
19 Interview with Malak `Abd al-Rahim, Beirut, 6 January 2015. On the use of embroidery in trousseaus, see Weir, *Embroidery from Palestine*, 10–11.
20 Weir, "Traditional Costumes," 45.
21 Outside the Middle East, in the two decades following the Nakba, the interest in Palestinian costumes shifted from missionaries and travelers to the institution of the museum. The Church Missionary Society disbanded its collection and much of it went to the Department of Ethnography at the British Museum in 1966, and the Jerusalem and the East Mission soon followed suit. Other collections experienced similar fates, such as John Whiting's and Florence Dibell Bartlett's collections, both of which were donated to the Museum of International Folk Art in New Mexico. Museum of International Folk Art, *Textiles*, 14.
22 Weir, *Palestinian Embroidery*, 9.
23 Dayan and Feinberg, *Crafts of Israel*, 100, 102.
24 Ibid., 154.
25 Amir, *Arabesque*, 7.
26 Dayan and Feinberg, *Crafts of Israel*, 6.
27 Ibid., 156.
28 Bushnaq, "Palestinian Art," 121. See also *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 43.
29 Mansour, *Stitching Palestine*, 10' 40''-11' 30''.
30 *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 3.
31 *Palestine* Sep 1978, 29. On theft, see also *Palestine*, 15 Oct 1977, 18; 1–15 Nov, 1980, 51. For a now canonical work on the centrality of archaeology to Israeli national ideology and the production of historical and cultural knowledge, see Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground*.
32 *Palestine* 31 Aug 1978, 35.
33 Ibid.
34 See Sayigh, *From Peasant to Revolutionaries*, 16–18.
35 For more on the women's movement and the changing role of women in Mandate Palestine, see Fleischmann, *Nation and Its "New" Women*.
36 It is not unusual for female labor to find a niche in manufacture and industry in areas considered the domain of women, such as textiles. See, for example, on female labor in the silk factories of Mount Lebanon, Khater, *Inventing Home*, Chapter 2.
37 TEAM, *Palestinian Labour Force in Lebanon*, 188.
38 Interview with Haifa Bibi and Sima Ghandur, 5 January 2015.
39 On Caland's own motivation for starting INAASH and other welfare projects in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon, see Twair, "Regrets Too Few to Mention," 62.

40 Interview with Malak `Abd al-Rahim, Beirut, 6 January 2015; Haifa Bibi and Sima Ghandur, 5 January 2015. Missionary schools also taught patterns that departed from the traditional patterns of Palestinian embroidery and derived from imported pattern books. Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow*, 164–165.
41 Ibid. Kawar also talks about how her earliest recollection of pre-1948 costumes is from the Saturday markets in Bethlehem in the 1940s, in Nasir, "Traditional Palestinian Costume," 118–119.
42 Interview with Malak `Abd al-Rahim, Beirut, 6 January 2015. Kawar also started visiting the refugee camps in Jordan after 1967 to collect information on her growing collection. There she met Weir of the British Museum, and they ended up collaborating on several projects. Nasir, "Traditional Palestinian Costume," 120.
43 Interviews with Malak `Abd al-Rahim, Beirut, 6 January 2015; and Haifa Bibi, Beirut, 7 January 2015.
44 TEAM, *Palestinian Labour Force in Lebanon*, 189.
45 Interviews with Malak `Abd al-Rahim, Beirut, 6 January 2015; and Haifa Bibi, Beirut, 7 January 2015.
46 Saca, *Embroidering Identities*, 13.
47 Rubenberg, "Civilian Infrastructure of the PLO," 73.
48 Antonius, "Fighting on Two Fronts," 31–32.
49 For more on the history of al-Najdeh, see "Association al-Najdeh," *al-Mashriq*.
50 TEAM, *Palestinian Labour Force in Lebanon*, 188. But it also employed a smaller number of women, with thirty working full time and three hundred other women producing on a monthly basis.
51 Another organization employing women as embroiders was the Palestine Red Crescent Society, which had been institutionalized under the Palestinian National Council in 1969. Its vocational training centers were managed by the Social Services Department of the PLO and offered women training in sewing, embroidery, languages, and typing. Rubenberg, "Civilian Infrastructure of the PLO," 65. Embroidery started in the mid-1970s in Beirut, and by 1981 the Department employed eighteen full-time employees distributing raw material to the 4427 women who were registered as embroiderers with the PRCS, 10% of whom were Lebanese. TEAM, "Palestinian Labour in Lebanon," 187.
52 For a detailed account of the conflict between the Palestinian factions in Jordan and the Jordanian regime and the events that led to the end of Palestinian military presence in Jordan, see Sayigh, "End of a Myth."
53 On the economic situation of Palestinians in Lebanon at the time, see Sayigh, "Struggle for Survival."
54 Khalidi, "Economics of Palestinian Liberation."
55 Suleiman, "Palestinians in Lebanon," 399.
56 *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 3.
57 Rubenberg, "SAMED," 437.
58 *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 7.
59 *Palestine* Aug–Sep 1975, 29.
60 Ibid., 31.
61 *Palestine* Jan 1977, 32. See also *Palestine* Jan 1979, 50, 63.
62 *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 44.
63 *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Dec 1978, 47–49.
64 The output for SAMED's last year of operation in Lebanon was about ten thousand pieces of embroidered works. TEAM, "Palestinian Labour Force in Lebanon," 188; Rubenberg, "Civilian Infrastructure of the PLO," 67–68.
65 See *Palestine* Jan 1977, 29; Aug 1978, 21; Jan 1980, 52.
66 *Palestine* Jan 1976, 19; Jan 1982, 80.
67 *Palestine* 1–15 Nov 1979, and Jan 1982, 80; *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* Oct 1978, 58–59, and Jun 1979, 71–73.
68 For example, *SAMED al-Iqtisadi* 3 May 1978, 21–28, and Apr 1979, 40–44; *Palestine* 16–31 Mar, 1979. SAMED also participated in the Leipzig Film Festival in 1978. *Palestine* Jan 1979, 61.
69 *Palestine* Jan 1982, 80.

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9 Restoring Fashion History

A Survey of 19th- and 20th-Century Black American Fashion Designers

Elizabeth Way

Introduction: An Oversimplified History

In 2020, visual culture scholar Malcolm Barnard commented in the second edition of *Fashion Theory: A Reader* that, “Race and ethnicity present suspiciously low profiles in fashion and clothing studies.”[1] That this should be true after decades of civil rights and social justice activism indicates the political nature of fashion history. Oversights and omissions create grievous gaps in the historical narrative that culminate in an inaccurate picture of how American fashion developed, erasing the significant contributions of vital players and impacting the prospects of future fashion designers. Acknowledgement of the ways in which Black cultural achievements have been denied and ignored accompanied the wider reckonings of the Black Lives Matter movement during the summer of 2020. At that time, industry activists and the mainstream press spotlighted Black creatives, including fashion designers, with mixed results for the practitioners, some of whom were presented with unprecedented customer demands that were short-lived. True inclusivity eludes the industry. For meaningful equity, every level of the fashion industry, including scholarship and education, must maintain initiatives to improve and move forward. In doing this work, scholars in particular must also look backward and restore Black fashion makers to the established fashion history narrative that inevitably finds its way from academia into mainstream culture.

Within the established fashion history narrative, Black American designers only began to impact the New York and wider national fashion industry during the late 1960s and 1970s. The most referenced Black designers within this period are Stephen Burrows and Willi Smith. The volume of press coverage they received and the financial success of their companies made their innovative designs particularly visible in the fashion industry, and they significantly contributed to the development of New York as a fashion capital. Burrows’s designs were part of a youth-driven movement that ushered in colorful, body-conscious styles, and he helped build New York’s international reputation by participating in the 1973 “Battle of Versailles” fashion show.[2] Smith was an early and successful designer of casual streetwear that conveyed a distinctly American style and was marketed to the masses, portending the future of American (and global) fashion.[3] The concurrent success and visibility of these and other designers like Scott Barrie,[4] Jon Haggins, and Jay Jaxon[5] (to name only a few) created a “moment” for Black designers that was often noted in the fashion, and sometimes mainstream, press. The rise of Black models in the international fashion industry preceded the “emergence” of Black designers. French couturiers, American designers, and the elite Euro-American fashion press featured models such as Donyale Luna and Naomi Sims in fashion shows and magazines from the mid-to-late

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1960s. These glamorous images allowed the public to view Black women in a new light, one that challenged centuries of denigrating stereotypes. Successful Black fashion professionals helped each other. Naomi Sims was an outspoken advocate for Black designers and lent her celebrity to their fashion presentations.[6] Robbie Marks, Scott Barrie's business partner, noted that the company specifically hired Black models such as Grace Jones, Iman, Alva Chin, Barbara Carrara, and Pat Cleveland, stating, "very few houses used [them], and at least half or more of our models were Black girls."[7] The growing success of both Black designers and models occurred against a background of profound change for American society as the Civil Rights Movement, countercultural and progressive ideals, and the increasing visibility of Black celebrities and politicians, Black music, and Black pride movements made their presence felt in mainstream culture.

Lois K. Alexander was an early pioneer to recognize the importance of studying and collecting the work of Black designers. She established the Black Fashion Museum in Harlem in 1979 and documented its exhibitions and the work of dozens of Black American designers in *Blacks in the History of Fashion* (1982), a book published by the Harlem Institute of Fashion—also founded by Alexander in 1966.[8] Alexander's work was unique until more recent exhibitions acknowledged the pivotal role of Black designers who influenced New York fashion. The Museum of the City of New York's *Stephen Burrows: When Fashion Danced* (2013), the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology's *Black Fashion Designers* (2016–2017, co-curated by the author), and *Willi Smith: Street Couture* (2020–2021) at the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum have helped bring the academic study and the material culture of these designers to a mainstream audience.

A traditional of narrative of American fashion relates that American fashion consumers preferred French couture (the real thing or copies at many price points) until the 1940s when designers such as Gilbert Adrian and Claire McCardell championed "American" looks that competed with French styles during the 1950s. This history acknowledges the countercultural and youth-driven influence on fashion during the mid-to-late 1960s and the rise of New York as a fashion capital during the 1970s. Established designers such as Norman Norell continued to dominate Seventh Avenue, while subcultural designers such as Rudi Gernreich, based in Los Angeles, introduced new ideas, like body-revealing and androgynous styles. During the 1970s, Halston is recognized as the most prominent and glamourous designer in New York, though ready-to wear designers, like Anne Klein who catered to working women, Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren rose to significance. Black designers were contributing to fashion culture at this time, yet, within a basic and general fashion history narrative, their "moment" seemed to wane during the 1980s with the notable (yet often overlooked) exceptions of Smith's continuing career and Patrick Kelly, who took his talents to Paris for greater opportunities than he could find in New York.[9] The corporatization of fashion that Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren represented left Black designers out because they could not attract the backers that other designers could.

What is left out of this story are the historical practices of Black fashion makers that have contributed to the American fashion system since the colonial period *and* the ongoing work of Black designers after the 1970s and into the twenty-first century. Although too few scholarly resources exist to fill in a pre-twentieth century history of Black fashion makers, studies of the Black designers in American fashion during the last decades of the twentieth century are almost entirely missing. This chapter lays out a brief history of Black American fashion makers, focusing mainly on womenswear design from the nineteenth century through the twentieth. It will point to existing research by dedicated scholars who have recovered the narratives of African American dressmakers and designers. This chapter will also exemplify a few late-twentieth century Black designers whose careers illustrate important themes in Black fashion history, including the importance of familial knowledge and Black support networks, the difficulties of the fashion business, and the intersectional challenges faced by Black female-identified designers after the 1960s.

For further sources on Black designers and Black fashion, online repositories are convenient places to start. *The Fashion and Race Database* (https://fashionandrace.org), founded by fashion educator and scholar Kimberly Jenkins offers bibliographies, profiles, and many other reputable resources. The *Fashioning the Self in Slavery and Freedom* (https://www.fashioningtheself.com) digital humanities project by historian and fashion scholar Jonathan Square explores Black fashion culture through original content, both textual and image-based, presenting entry points for further exploration.

Black Fashion before the Civil War

This survey of Black American fashion makers follows and expands a three-part structure laid out in the author's previous research that looks at Black American fashion design in three stages: enslaved dressmakers, post-Civil War and Jim Crow-era transitional dressmakers and designers, and late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century designers.[10] These stages are not distinct and traits from one overlap into others. Generally, enslaved dressmakers worked anonymously and did not receive credit or payment for their work.[11] Very few examples of clothing known to be made by enslaved dressmakers exist, although some documented histories survive. The origin of Black American sewing and dressmaking may be impossible to pin down, however the earliest African women and men who were forced and came freely to colonial America practiced these skills. Historians Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross have expanded the conceptions of early American Black women, examining not only enslaved women's experiences during the seventeenth century, but also the lives of free Black women in sixteenth-century New Spain.[12] Coming to the Americas, Black women brought their existing textile knowledge from West and Central Africa, not only of sewing and garment construction, but also of textile-related agriculture, spinning, weaving, and dyeing and melded these skills with Euro-American clothing traditions.[13] By the nineteenth century, enslaved dressmakers and seamstresses formed a vital sector of American clothing production from the highest-end styles for elite white women to the disposable garments created for enslaved workers.[14] By mid-century, the American fashion system began to incorporate monumental changes: the rise of ready-to-wear manufacture, first for menswear and later for womenswear, including clothing for enslaved people, and the decreasing price of fabric due to industrial production. Cheaper fabric increased dressmakers' business, though the cheapest cloth was reserved for enslaved peoples.[15] Black fashion makers practicing at this time often learned their skills from other Black women, especially family members. Sewing and dressmaking knowledge held tangible value that one generation could pass down to empower the next. The teaching of dressmaking skills is a theme that consistently reappears in the histories of Black fashion makers, even during the later twentieth century when formal schooling became the norm for fashion designers. This system mirrors the formal apprentice system historically practiced by mainstream fashion makers in the United States and Europe and resulted in a continual

Black American dressmaking and design tradition that can be traced from generation to generation.

Scholars of African American history cannot avoid the important role that sartorial practices have played in the culture and identity formation of Black Americans, both enslaved and free. In just one example among countless, Ramey Berry and Gross detail the clothing of a woman named Agnes who emancipated herself in Virginia in 1766, noting the "bright-colored clothing made of mixed materials, such as wool and satin, glazed and brocaded floral, striped, or checked patterns … colored ribbons and silver buckles [that] aided in masking her enslaved status."[16] Fashion and dress scholars have written specifically on the power and significance of Black style and dress, as well as the practices of Black fashion makers from the nineteenth century and earlier, drawing on diverse resources, such as federal and local records, "runaway slave" advertisements seeking self-emancipated persons, the Federal Work Projects Administration "Slave Narratives," literature, illustrations, cartoons, and photographs, as well as diaries, corporate records, and extant garments.[1] Their works examine how Black people created distinct styles and engaged with Eurocentric fashion. These were often crucial and sustaining acts of identity formation and personal expression that allowed Black people to declare their humanity, code switch between Black and white societies, find pleasure, and exercise creativity.

Some scholars identify specific Black fashion makers. Helen Bradly Foster, for example, points to the nineteenth-century Black agricultural workers, spinners, weavers, dyers, sewers, tailors, and dressmakers in the southern United States whose clothing production was recorded in the *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938* archive.[17] Katie Knowles's work highlights the extant garments of enslaved Black Americans, including a mid-nineteenth-century linen and cotton dress with detailed embellishment work—indicating "this was not an everyday work dress"—that was worn by at least one woman enslaved on the Murray plantations in Alamance County, North Carolina. She also examined an 1850s floral calico skirt that had been altered as it was passed down in the family of Janet Galloway on their journey from enslavement to freedom in Georgia.[18] These studies show important methods for

1 Some of these scholars' works are: Patricia K. Hunt, "Clothing as an Expression of History: The Dress of African-American Women in Georgia, 1880–1915," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 459–471, doi: 10.2307/40582547; Helen Bradley Foster, *New Raiments of Self: African American Clothing in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Shane White and Graham White, *Stylin' African American Expressive Culture from Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Monica L. Miller, *Slaves to Fashion Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Daina Ramey Berry, "We Sho Was Dressed Up": Slave Women, Material Culture, and Decorative Arts in Wilkes County, Georgia" in *The Savannah River Valley up to 1865: Fine Arts, Architecture, and Decorative Arts,* ed. Ashley Callahan (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 2003); Eulanda A. Sanders, "Female Slave Narratives and Appearance: Assimilation, Experience, and Escape," *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 29, no.4 (November 2011): 267–83, doi:10.1177/0887302×X11425955; Eulanda A. Sanders, "The Politics of Textiles Used in African American Slave Clothing," *Textile Society of American Symposium Proceedings,* October 2012, accessed May 21, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283352854_The_Politics_of_Textiles_Used_in_African_American_Slave_Clothing; Jonathan Michael Square, "A Stain on an All-American Brand: How Brooks Brothers Once Clothed Slaves," *Vestoj*, accessed April 16, 2021, http://vestoj.com/how-brooks-brothers-once-clothed-slaves/; Jonathan Michael Square, "Slavery's Warp, Liberty's Weft: A Look at the Work of Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Enslaved Fashion Makers and Their Legacies," in *Black Designers in American Fashion,* ed. Elizabeth Way (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

recovering fashion information from more general sources on African American history and the ways in which material culture can shed light on Black narratives. Extant garments can be as illuminating as written documents. In a literal example, Jonathan Square points to Cumber, a dressmaker living in North Carolina during the Civil War who made a printed cotton dress for her enslaver Janie Wright Robeson MacKethan in 1864. The dress is labeled with her name and a brief biography.[2]

Elizabeth Keckly, who published her memoir *Behind the Scenes: Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* in 1868, is perhaps the most documented nineteenth-century Black dressmaker. Born enslaved in Virginia, Keckly learned both dressmaking and how to read and write from her mother and bought her freedom with funds secured through her wealthy white dressmaking clients in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1855. She then exercised her freedom by moving to Washington, D.C., where she established herself as the city's top dressmaker, counting First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln among her clients. She was also an abolitionist leader and active socialite in Washington's Black community.[19] Keckly took the skills passed down to her by her mother and transformed them from enslaved labor into free labor; her history exemplifies dressmaking as an activist practice to resist and escape enslavement and combat the poverty and invisibility faced by the majority of nineteenth-century Black American women.

This author's initial three-part structure focused on enslaved fashion makers, however free working class and middle class Black dressmakers also worked in the United States before the Civil War. Dressmaker Mehitable Jacobs Primus and her one-time apprentice, seamstress Addie Brown, exemplify a population of Black women fashion workers in Hartford, Connecticut during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. These women practiced at different economic levels, and some, like Primus, were successful property-owners. In many ways their experiences reflected those of later transitional designers. They dressed Black and white clients, filtering the fashion inspiration that came from France into American styles that reflected their creative labor and tastes and the aspirations of their communities. Although free Black dressmakers surely did not escape racial discrimination in the North, their stories show that not all Black American experiences before the Civil War were defined by slavery.[20]

Transitional Makers

Transitional Black fashion makers worked after the Civil War approximately between the mid-nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. Some dressmakers, such as Keckly and Primus, straddled the ante- and post-bellum periods. Transitional designers coped with the intense racism and sexism of the post-bellum era, some gaining emancipation after the end of the war and the enactment of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, and others born free. Dressmaking was among the most respectable and highest paying employment available to Black women, and some of the most successful dressmakers of this period exercised their freedom by moving to large cities where they could access clients, mostly other Black women, but sometimes also wealthy, socially elite white women.[21] Significantly, successful Black dressmakers could expand their

2 The hem of the dress (in the collection of the North Carolina Museum of History) reads, "Dress made in 1864 by 'Combo' wife of 'Jim Dry,' the 'carriage driver'/mothers 'seamstress' about the age of sister Sarah Ann." Square, "Slavery's Warp, Liberty's Weft," 32–34.

businesses and train other Black women in lucrative dressmaking skills, extending the familial networks that enslaved and free Black women had constructed for generations.

Turn-of-the-twentieth-century dressmaker Fannie Criss was a highly successful fashion maker and businesswoman who catered to a wealthy white clientele in Richmond, Virginia. The material culture she left behind shows her exquisite skill in creating highly ornate gowns, embellished with pleating, flounces, lace, and appliqué, and her history reflects the movements and challenges of her contemporary Black businesswomen. Criss found both artistic and financial success at a time in which Jim Crow laws were actively restricting the opportunities of the Black middle class. She eventually joined millions of other Black Americans in the Great Migration, moving to Harlem in New York City during the 1910s. Her surviving material culture places her in an elite class of dressmakers producing American fashion during a period when the fashion system was changing.[22] The increased marketing of patternmaking systems and tools helped flood the dressmaking business with new practitioners, and increasing ready-to-wear manufacture was putting smaller dressmaking establishments out of business. Much of this manufacturing was centered in New York City, helping to establish it as the country's fashion capital. Women were the main workforce in clothing manufacture, however Black women were all but shut out of this employment.[23] The author's study of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Black dressmakers in New York looks at how these changes manifested in the professions of Black fashion makers[24] (Figure 9.1).

Ann Lowe is an exemplary transitional fashion designer whose work connects nineteenth-century artisanal dressmaking and business practices with the growing commercialization of fashion in New York City. Her career spanned the 1910s in Montgomery, Alabama, and 1920s in Tampa, Florida. She made a temporary move to New York City to attend fashion school in 1917 before making a permanent move to establish her custom design business in 1928. Lowe's life and work reflect many of the experiences that Fannie Criss and other Black women faced: the restrictions of the Jim Crow South, migration to other cities for greater opportunities, and an attraction to New York as a fashion center. Yet Lowe also followed paths taken by later fashion designers, such as her attendance in fashion school. She was already highly skilled at the start of her term and graduated early, despite the discrimination she faced as the only Black student.[25] However, it is possible that Lowe pursued fashion education, not to hone her technical and creative skills, but to increase her prestige in the New York fashion industry, establish contacts, and gain a foothold in the city—a course followed by generations of fashion students after her. Like Criss and Keckly before her, Lowe catered to elite white society women—she is best known as the designer of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's 1953 wedding dress. Like many other Black dressmakers and designers, Lowe learned her craft from her grandmother and mother, both highly skilled dressmakers who were born enslaved in Alabama. Lowe took these skills and her design talent and created an exclusive fashion brand. While her business in Tampa was run similarly to nineteenth-century dressmaking ateliers—she catered to individual clients from a workshop adjacent to her home and trained her own apprentices—her career in New York reveals many facets of the changing American fashion system.[26] Lowe's work was custom-sewn with extraordinary handmade details, especially her signature fabric flowers, and she worked one-on-one with socialite brides and debutantes to create their unique gowns. Yet this business was exclusive and thus difficult to establish and maintain, especially during the Great Depression. Lowe was known to charge less for her

Figure 9.1 Ann Lowe, silk appliquéd dress, 1958. Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of the Black Fashion Museum founded by Lois K. Alexander-Lane.

Public domain, see: https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2007.3.21?destination=edan-search/collection_search%3Fedan_q%3D%252A%253A%252A%26edan_fq%255B0%255D%3Dp.edanmdm.indexedstructured.name%253A%2522Lowe%252C%2520Ann%2522%26op%3DSearch.

work than comparable producers—she self-admittedly had a poor head for business but might have also felt compelled to keep prices low to stay competitive among her exclusive clientele. Undercharging led to recurring financial difficulties throughout her career. Lowe at various times in her New York career worked as an anonymous designer under a manufacturer's label, designed on commission, sold through department stores, owned her own company, joined with business partners, and worked as an in-house custom designer for Saks Fifth Avenue department store. She weathered the fluctuations of an evolving fashion system with one foot in the past with her one-of-a-kind, couture-quality designs, and one in the future as a designer working within the New York industry. Like the New York designers of the 1960s and 1970s, Lowe established herself as an artistic creator, cultivated an elegant and stylish persona in line with the idealized image of a designer, and crafted her fashion authority in the press.[27]

Zelda Wynn Valdes also catered to elite clients and specialized in custom eveningwear, however her Harlem shop, opened in 1948, drew clients from the entertainment world. Her performance gowns for celebrities such as Josephine Baker, Dorothy Dandridge, Mae West, and Ella Fitzgerald were famous for their body-hugging bodices and feminine details, blurring an aesthetic line between fashion and stage costume. Wynn Valdes also created gowns for Harlem socialites, such as Maria Hawkins Ellington's 1948 bridal gown for her marriage to Nat King Cole.[28] Born in Pennsylvania, Wynn Valdes again drew on generations of Black women's skills, learning to sew from her mother, grandmother, and her grandmother's dressmaker. Her family moved to White Plains, New York in 1923, and she worked in her uncle's tailoring shop as a teenager, altering high-end women's garments. She branched out on her own in White Plains before opening her shop on Broadway in Harlem. Tanisha C. Ford aptly outlines the difference in perception garnered by transitional Black women fashion makers and the haute couturiers that dominated the public image of a fashion designer: "Valdes began her career in the peak years of Jim Crow segregation, when black seamstresses were largely low-wage earning service industry workers. The title "designer" or "couturier" was typically reserved for esteemed white men. Seamstresses were deemed problem solvers, while couturiers were lauded as genius innovators."[29] Yet, Valdes's work was highly publicized because of her famous clients—their success and visibility created demand for her designs and in turn, her designs became a signifier of success for Black, and some white, entertainers. The work of Wynn Valdes, Lowe, and Criss was on par with French couture, in terms of technical skill and creative design. All three excelled in the arena of custom-made, high-quality fashion, but have been largely written out of the history of fashion.

Wynn Valdes also worked to bring Black fashion makers into the formalized fashion industry. She joined the National Association of Fashion and Accessories Designers (NAFAD), which was founded in New York in 1949 by Jeanetta Welch Brown and Mary McCleod Bethune-Cookman of the National Council of Negro Women. The organization opened chapters in other cities and worked to forge connections between Black designers and the mainstream fashion industry. NAFAD invited influential mainstream designers, publicists, and press to fashion events showcasing Black designers' work and created projects to support Black fashion businesses. As a successful and well-known designer, Wynn Valdes's participation and tenure as New York chapter president was significant and inspiring, illustrating the ways in which twentieth-century Black designers created new networks to pass on Black fashion skills and business knowledge.[30]

Gaining a Foothold on Seventh Avenue

While transitional designers melded nineteenth-century dressmaking practices and business models with engagement in the industrialized fashion system, mid-to-late-twentieth and twenty-first-century designers largely worked within the Seventh Avenue fashion system, or in adjacent or similar networks, producing ready-to-wear garments. By the 1960s, many of these designers for womenswear were men, following the mainstream movement that Ford noted, favoring the artistic genius of the male fashion designer working in industry over female-identified dressmakers as sole proprietors. Although many found their earliest inspirations, training, and encouragement from Black women—mothers and grandmothers—and sometimes created businesses from their homes, their practices were more in line with the formalized fashion industry. They often attended design schools such as the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and Parsons School of Design and found jobs as designers-for-hire and design room managers at the manufacturing firms that dominated mid-century American fashion. When these male designers did create garments in home ateliers, they often sold their designs on consignment in boutiques. A few Black designers carved out successful, yet anonymous, careers at larger companies during the mid-twentieth century, while others found greater visibility in establishing their own labels.

Jon Weston, a New Yorker of Caribbean descent, graduated from FIT in 1955, and like many fashion students before and after him, he sought entry-level jobs on Seventh Avenue to begin his career. In 1967, the Black newspaper the *New York Amsterdam News* vividly described his trajectory to independent designer,

> He was greeted with amazement and discouragement as he applied for a job designing in the Garment Center. It didn't stop him. He doggedly pushed and pulled his way to the top. By way of designing everything from shoes to belts and several lean years, he got his foot in the door. After many years of being a "first" and successful designer he decided that designing only was not what was happening. Following the trend that was becoming the future—designer-manufacturer—he resigned his job and started on one sewing machine in his apartment … Today he has an entire floor of a garment center skyscraper and employs more than twenty-five people. Oh yes, he is alive and well at 491 7th Avenue … and his out of sight clothes can be found just about everywhere.[31]

Weston started his own business around 1966 and was clearly talented—one reporter from the *New York Amsterdam News* described his work as feminine and "very unusual, exciting and saleable designs … executed with the professionalism of the European masters."[32] Within his first three years in business he was selling through Bergdorf Goodman, Bloomingdale's, and Bendel's department stores, but this did not translate into financial stability. Stores only paid designers after delivery, sometimes months later, so designers had to cover all upfront material and production costs and hope that nothing went wrong. Late orders were often rejected by stores without payment because these garments would spend less time on the selling floor, making them less likely to sell at full price before discount sales were implemented to make way for new stock. Weston was enterprising, however, and took advantage of opportunities offered to Black businessmen at the time. In 1968, he was selected by Capital Formation for an emergency loan to keep his business afloat. The New York–based organization aimed to raise awareness that "minority-owned businesses can supply [businessmen and the customer public] with quality goods and services comparable to those on the market today,"[33] and matched minority business owners with volunteer advisors, such as corporate executives and investors. With hundreds of hours of advisement and assistance in securing a bank loan from his mentors, a banker and a marketing specialist, Weston made changes to his business in its marketing, wholesaling, bookkeeping, and pricing. Other Black designers, including John Simmons and Bernard Johnson, also participated in the program which could only begin to fill a deficit in financial resources and experience that had been systematically taken from and denied to Black American communities. Similar programs continue to attempt to address this disparity into the twenty-first century. Weston was an obvious success story for Capital Formation as they showcased his work in the 1970 National Merchandise Show, the first year that minority-owned business were featured.[34] In 1971, Weston—now with two lines, Jon Weston and JW Boutique—secured further financing from a Community Economic Development Program through Chase Bank.[35] Weston attempted to pay his success forward. As early as 1967 he participated in the Harlem Cultural Festival Fashion Show featuring "Fashions and textiles by Negro designers," including Scott Barrie, that, "place[d] emphasis on career development and job opportunities."[36]

Weston's success is all the more noteworthy because of his early struggles gaining experience in the fashion industry and his financial difficulties. Yet, it cannot help but point to other Black designers who were not as able to find resources and loans. For example, none of the newspaper articles on Weston and other Black designers receiving financial advice or loans mention Black female-identified designers. Weston did not appear as often as some other Black designers in the mainstream fashion press; Scott Barrie and Stephen Burrows, who maintained significant presence in prominent department stores and dressed white and Black celebrities, garnered much more coverage in the most prominent mainstream press outlets, including *Vogue* and the trade newspaper *Women's Wear Daily*. Weston, however, advertised heavily in the trade paper during the early 1970s with small and provocative ads that read, "Jon Weston is ALIVE AND DOING WELL at HOTEL YORK 488 7th AVE., N.Y.C. WE MUST BE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT."[37] These were perhaps a nod to his lack of mainstream press coverage. Weston did, however, maintain a high profile in the Black community. He participated in the Ebony Fashion Fair, and the *New York Amsterdam News* followed his business and personal life through the mid-1970s, declaring him a "pioneer," "fashion dictator," "fashion king," and "designer extraordinaire."[38] This coverage might indicate that he had a stronger following among Black customers. The newspaper reported on his social activities and upcoming collection as late as 1986, demonstrating Weston's longevity in the industry.[39]

Other mid-century Black designers also moved between different roles in the industry at various times in their careers, working anonymously or sometimes publicly acknowledged as head designers for manufacturers. Arthur McGee, a Detroit native whose fashion interest was sparked by his mother, a talented dressmaker, began his career in millinery. He moved to New York to attend the Traphagen School of Fashion and FIT during the early 1950s, though his studies were brief, and he was told that there were no opportunities for Black designers.[40] Undeterred, McGee left school and began selling his designs in the East Village, finding loyal clients for his clean-lined and structural sportswear in actors and dancers. His experience eventually led him to Seventh Avenue where he designed several lines for the manufacturer College Town of Boston. In 1957 McGee was appointed the head of the design room at the manufacturer, Bobby Brooks, and he is widely credited as the first Black designer to lead a Seventh Avenue design room. Despite his success, McGee spoke of the anonymity and discrimination he faced, "When I started [in 1956], I was working in the backrooms and designing whole collections without credit ... I would walk into an office in a custom-made suit and they still assumed I was a messenger."[41] Opening his own store in 1965, McGee became known for daring and varied fabric choices, such as African textiles combined with simple, voluminous silhouettes, which he also sold through department stores. His aesthetic followed in the tradition of American sportswear, infused with his own distinctive style. Beyond his important design legacy and long career—his work appeared in fashion magazines through the 1990s—McGee was a supportive mentor for aspiring Black designers. He notes, "I was the only one around, everyone came to my studio. I used to go at night and help people, all the designers around the city."[42] Jon Weston, Arthur McGee, and other designers such as James Daugherty and Wesley Tann, are important names in the history of fashion. They helped establish a Black presence on Seventh Avenue that normalized the idea of diverse fashion designers.[43] They also acted as a bridge between transitional designers and the contemporary industry and served as mentors for younger generations.

The 1980s and 1990s: Tracy Reese

Black designers, such as Haitian designer Fabrice Simon, known for sparkling, art-inspired, beaded eveningwear, and Washington, D.C., native Jeffrey Banks, a menswear designer who embraced color and pattern in classic silhouettes, continued to work on Seventh Avenue during the 1980s and 1990s. These designers were important in establishing the high fashion aesthetics of the era: conspicuous styles that attracted attention and exuded wealth. Yet, Black designers have never worked in one style or drawn from one essentialized experience. Simultaneously, other designers were creating a fashion revolution outside of the mainstream industry through hip hop style. Elena Romero's work on hip hop fashion is the first to document the major influence of designers such as April Walker, Carl Jones and T. J. Walker of Cross Colours, and Karl Kani, who established brands during the late 1980s and 1990s and whose work continues to impact international fashion.[44] Dapper Dan of Harlem is an especially innovative and influential designer. His groundbreaking work amplified the appeal of European designer logos starting in the early 1980s by incorporating them into exaggerated and streetwear-inspired silhouettes and fabrications. Dapper Dan's influence is consistently seen on high fashion runways, though he was forced underground in 1992 when several of the European brands pursued legal action against him for infringing on their copyrighted logos. It was not until 2017 when Gucci finally collaborated with Dapper Dan (after criticism for copying his 1980s and 1990s designs), that the most sought-after hip-hop designer received global recognition for his highly original fashion designs.[45]

The 1980s and 1990s saw the solidification of New York as a major international fashion capital as American sportswear brands grew exponentially. Willi Smith and Patrick Kelly both commanded large fashion brands that saw international sales in the millions of dollars;[46] however, both were lost to AIDS along with a generation of fashion professionals, Smith in 1987 and Kelly in 1990. Just a few of the other Black designers working during this period include, Eric Gaskins, Kevan Hall, Gordon Henderson, Bryon Lars, Isaia Rankin, Patrick Robinson, Andre Walker, and Edward Wilkerson. Within this sampling of designers, each has a distinctive aesthetic, ranging from all-American sportswear (Henderson) to innovative athleisure (Rankin), Hollywood glamor (Hall), understated sophistication (Gaskins), inventive twists on classic shapes (Lars), and wildly creative silhouettes (Walker). Robinson and Wilkerson built their reputations working for established brands, the former at a range of companies from Armani to the Gap, and the latter at the Seventh Avenue bridge label Lafayette 148.

Figure 9.2 Tracy Reese fashion show, 2008. The Pocket.

Public domain, see: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tracy_Reese_2008.jpg#/media/File:Tracy_Reese_2008.jpg

Very few Black female-identified designers were covered in the fashion press at this time. Tracy Reese is a notable exception (Figure 9.2). Reese recalled of the late 1980s, "Getting into the industry at the time that I started, it was an industry full of old-school garmentos[3] who would kind of look at you like, 'You don't know what you're doing and you're a girl' … The people holding the pocketbooks weren't eager to open them up to women."[47] Growing up in Detroit, Michigan, Reese attended the well-known Cass Technical High School, where she studied fashion before attending Parsons School of Design. She worked for the designer Martine Sitbon while still in school and went on to design Sitbon's Arlequin line.[48] Reese's family backed her first namesake label in 1987, described as "clean and uncluttered" sportwear, which within three seasons was sold through Barney's New York, Ann Taylor, Macy's San Francisco, Bullocks-Wilshire, and several specialty stores.[49] Reese, like Weston before her, found that these prominent orders did not translate into profits. In the wake of the 1987 stock market crash and subsequent financial crises, journalist Constance White noted, "Her firm suffered from a not uncommon malaise for

3 "Garmentos" refer to garment industry workers at a time when the business (the "rag trade") was considered to be distinctively less glamourous than what was rebranded "the fashion industry" during the late twentieth century.

small SA houses—strong orders and not enough capital to handle them."[50] Looking back years later, she remembered the lack of business training in fashion education, "Parsons was a fantastic school, but there was zero focus on the business side of fashion … The school has since created a master's program in fashion management, but at the time, we just knew how to make clothes."[51] Reese learned on the job, taking care of all aspects of her business, from shipping to invoicing. She told *Women's Wear Daily* after the closing of her two-year-old venture that she would relaunch, "I am looking for a backer and a partner, or all in one. In order to design the collection I really want, I need financial and physical backing. There was too much work for one person to do well, and family money just wasn't enough."[52] In the meantime, Reese honed her design skills and knowledge of the fashion business by working for other companies. She designed the Perry Ellis Portfolio line, working under the brand's designer, her friend and Parsons classmate, Marc Jacobs. The portfolio line was closed after several months, and Reese again turned to her network and personal resources, working freelance and consulting for Gordon Henderson, who acted as a mentor. Like previous generations of Black designers, they supported each other; Reese noted, "Gordon is like my big brother. He taught me so much about succeeding in this business."[53] Reese also found support from fellow women designers, including Anna Sui, who advised her on practical issues, as Sui stated, "There is no school to learn what we do: what to do about business, what to do about financing, what to do about the garbage."[54]

In 1990, Reese joined Magaschoni, a label owned by the Hong Kong–based manufacturer Magtague. After two years of designing their bridge collection, the company rebranded as a designer line under Reese's eclectic vision, complete with fashion shows and a "Tracy Reese for Magaschoni" label. Magtague's owner, Magdalena Lee praised, "I've worked with a lot of designers from Yves Saint Laurent to Calvin Klein and what really impressed me about Tracy is she knows how to make a better garment … She's a young person but she understands attention to detail and has a good talent in selecting colors and bodies."[55] Reese's position as a respected Seventh Avenue designer was confirmed by her induction into the Council of Fashion Designers of America in 1994.[56] Early the next year, she branched out on her own, freelancing again and using the profits to relaunch her eponymous line.[57] And again her family helped her weather the financial burdens of the industry,

> Traditionally in the fashion industry, you are pretty much nine months out of pocket before you get any receivables, so you have to be able to pay all your personal and production expenses, development expenses, and photoshoots for a minimum of nine months before you get a dime back. You need a good year's worth of funding. My dad started me off with a chunk and sent me money pretty much every month to keep going. The money was a gift; he would never let me pay him back. I think he was passionate about me having the type of opportunity he never did.[58]

Reese built her brand on feminine dresses—now a signature of her design aesthetic, along with quality production, good fit, and fabrics in colorful patterns and unique textures—and found a backer in Om Batheja, president of Apparel Winds in 1997. The partnership with Batheja, who had previously partnered with Willi Smith, allowed Reese to launch a secondary line.[59]

Tracy Reese remains a mainstay of Seventh Avenue and beyond, having diversified her brand into several lines, sold through her own stores and international outlets. Although she may be best remembered as a favorite of First Lady Michelle Obama, Reese is also an industry veteran who in 2021 is leading significant changes in American fashion by rejecting wasteful practices and re-focusing her supply chains on sustainability and fair and domestic production.[60] Tracy Reese's experiences and career development are crucial to understanding late-twentieth century American fashion. Counting her, and so many others, among significant American designers is essential for a balanced and nuanced history of fashion.

Conclusion

This brief overview offers a general impression of the significant impact that Black designers have had on the American fashion industry. Whether they have been visible or not, Black fashion makers have always impacted American style and culture. They will continue to do so into the future. A lack of social justice has meant that problems faced by Black designers a century ago persist in the industry—lack of financial backing, denied access to education, and more general systematic discrimination that pushes Black people away from creative fields. Yet, during the early twenty-first century, the American fashion system has been forced open. Technologies, such as social media and direct-to-consumer sales, are allowing fashion makers to bypass traditional gatekeepers like retail stores and magazine editors. Sustainability efforts are teaching consumers that ethically produced fashion is worth the wait, allowing small scale designers to receive payment first and use it to fund production. These developments benefit Black designers because they allow disadvantaged makers to take more agency in their businesses. It should go without saying that Black fashion design cannot be summarized in aesthetic terms—Black designers create according to their individual artistic impulses and diverse perspectives. Any number of them deserve more scholarship to examine their specific histories, cultural impacts, design styles, and business practices. What binds them into a group to be addressed in this chapter is their marginalization and erasure. This is one effort to correct fashion history and restore their stories to a larger narrative so that a more complete fashion history can inform a more complete present and future American fashion culture.

Notes

1 Barnard, "Fashion: Identity and Difference." 264.
2 Givhan, *The Battle of Versailles*; Morera, *Stephen Burrows*; Wilson Myers, "Color Story."
3 Cunningham Cameron, *Willi Smith*.
4 Way, "Scott Barrie."
5 Lisby, "Jay Jaxon."
6 Morris, Tribute to Black Designers," A18.
7 Marks and Marks.
8 Alexander, *Blacks in the History,* 9–10.
9 Pritchard, "Race WERK."
10 Way, "Elizabeth Keckly and Ann Lowe," 121.
11 Ibid., 123
12 Ramey Berry and Gross, *Black Women's History,* 9–23.
13 Bradley Foster, *New Raiments of Self*.
14 Knowles, "The Fabric of Fast Fashion," 20.
15 Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoise*, 53–54, 69; Knowles, "The Fabric of Fast Fashion," 20.
16 Ramey Berry and Gross, *A Black Women's History*, 42–43.

17 Bradley Foster, *Raiments of* Self. The *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938* digital collection can be found on The Library of Congress's website: https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/about-this-collection/
18 Knowles, "Fashioning Slavery, 33; Knowles, "Altered; faded; Bleeding."
19 Reynolds, "Slaves to Fashion"; Way, "Elizabeth Keckly and Ann Lowe."
20 Miller, "Mehitable Primus and Addie Brown."
21 Dabel, *A Respectable Woman,* 74-5.
22 Stewart, "Dressing Up."
23 Gamber, "Reduced to Science*,"* 67.
24 Way, "A Matrilineal Thread."
25 Powell, "Life and Work of Ann Lowe"; Square, "Slavery's Warp, Liberty's Weft," 39.
26 Powell, "Life and Work of Ann Lowe," 15.
27 Powell, "Life and Work of Ann Lowe"; Way, "Elizabeth Keckly and Ann Lowe: Constructing Fashionable Black Identity."
28 Deihl, "Zelda Wynn Valdes."; Ford, "Overlooked: Zelda Wynn Valdes."
29 Ford, "Overlooked: Zelda Wynn Valdes."
30 Deihl, "Zelda Wynn Valdes," 231-2; Ivey-Christie, "This Organization."
31 "Mr. Fashion on 7th Avenue," 40; Slack, "Surprise Party For Jon," B5.
32 "Fashion King Jon Weston," B5.
33 "Minority Biz At Merchandise Show," 35; "Where Seventh Ave.," 18.
34 "Minority Biz At Merchandise Show," 35; "Where Seventh Ave.," 18.
35 "Bank Loans For Fashion Designers," 5.
36 "Fashion in Harlem," 10.
37 "Advertisement: Jon Weston," 30.
38 "Ebony Fashion Fair," B1; "Mr. Fashion," 40; "Miss Simmons," C13; "Fashion King Jon Weston," B5.
39 Connors, "BRAIN holds gala," 20.
40 *Fashion of Arthur McGee*; Feitelberg, "Arthur McGee," 6.
41 Talley, "Black Designers," 171.
42 *Fashion of Arthur McGee;* Feitelberg, "Arthur McGee," 6.
43 Koski, "Obituary: James Daugherty," 17; Deihl, "Wesley Tann."
44 Romero, *Free Stylin'.*
45 Elia, "Dapper Dan."; Day and Awake, *Dapper Dan.*
46 "Bright World," 10; Lockwood, "Kelly Spring Showing," 2.
47 "Tracy Reese in Conversation."
48 A.R. "Three Strike Out," 8.
49 Chua, "Tracy Reese," 5; Lenoir, "On Her Own Again," 6.
50 White, "Designers On Designing," 11.
51 Birch, "Tracy Reese."
52 A.R. "Three Strike Out," 8.
53 Gregory, "Tracy Reese," 78.
54 White, "Patterns: Young designers," A22.
55 White, "Designers On Designing," 11; Lockwood, "Sportswear Report," 12.
56 "Cfda Adds 20 Members," 21.
57 "Magaschoni, Tracy Reese," 11; Lisa Lockwood, "Reese Returns," 2.
58 Birch, "Tracy Reese."
59 White, "Patterns: Designer wanted," B6; "Have Plenty," 74.
60 Birch, "Tracy Reese."

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10 Fashion and Feminism

Louise Wallenberg

Introduction

For a long time, fashion and feminism were considered to constitute each other's absolute counterpart, and a "union" between the two was seen as utterly improbable. From a feminist viewpoint, fashion has often been considered to be one of the mechanisms that serve to keep women powerless and objectified in their ascribed role as the feminine other to the masculine self. From the viewpoint of most fashion, feminism has often been seen as an anti-feminine, or even emasculating, movement that leaves no room for the pleasures that fashion entail for women. And while feminism and fashion have started to engage with one another—not least through practitioner *and* scholarly work—the gap between the two is still noticeable in current discussions. The eternal question, or problem, regards how and if feminists can (and should) be interested in fashion, and whether fashion (ever) can be feminist.

Yet, feminism (or rather, *feminisms*) and fashion (or *fashions*, since fashion too exists in the plural) are intimately related in a myriad of ways. They are connected through their engagement with and focus on women and "femininity," and both can therefore be said to occupy a specifically "female domain" (although it is not female *par excellance*, since this domain is much dictated by men at the top). They are also related in terms of aesthetics, and at times through their "lack" thereof. Fashion may be understood to be all about aesthetics, and feminism, or rather, *feminists*, have often expressed their political stance aesthetically, as for example when feminists have chosen to dress in fashion for strategic purposes. As for the "lack" of aesthetics, this becomes most apparent for both phenomena in times of change: For fashion, when breaking with what is considered accepted and introducing a new fashion or style that will be considered odd, provocative, even ugly—that is, as not aesthetically pleasing—before it is being accepted. For feminism, when feminists refuse prevailing fashions to express resistance to the patriarchal and capitalist construction of (hetero)normative femininity. Hence, fashion and feminism are clearly related through their will to *change*: Both aim at affecting and changing the status quo. Yet, there is a huge difference between the change that is driving them: For feminism, the will to change is of a purely political nature, while for fashion, change is an artistic and commercial matter of (re)inventing style.

But their relation does not stop there: Fashion and feminism are also connected through their inherent performativity. Feminism is performative in the way it forcefully expresses and utters political ideas, just like fashion is performative through its display of gender and sexual difference. Yet, fashion too may express ideas that are political, which means that it may tally with feminist efforts. Hence, fashion is not only an aesthetic

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expression, nor is it only a material artefact produced for consumption: It may reflect ongoing political struggles. Finally, fashion and feminism are intimately connected through their absolute "obsession" with gender: And both have, over time, vacillated between maintaining and/or challenging normative gender constructions and ideals.

Fashion and feminism also share a mutual history, as if developing in tandem with one another. It is in the latter part of the nineteenth century that women's early demands for equality start to emerge, and this is also when fashion will start to become more "democratised" through faster and cheaper production and consumption patterns. When the relation between fashion and feminism (encompassing all of the connections described above) kicks off in the late nineteenth century, it is characterized by being in constant flux and their complicated, yet intricate, connection, continues into the following century—and well into our own century.

Hence, for the past 170 years, feminism has either been influenced by (and drawn advantages from) fashion, or it has been bashing and trashing it. Fashion too has been influenced by feminism in certain periods, and in recent times, fashion has been inspired by feminism in a most candid manner as in having feminist slogans printed on t-shirts. It is today apparent that feminism (and feminists)—while gaining more visibility, acceptance, and power in the latter part of the twentieth century—has become more inclusive and endorsing of its long-time accomplice and opponent: Fashion. It is also apparent that while fashion at large seems to have embraced feminism (partly only in order to increase goodwill, and hence, profit), there are certain sections of fashion that have embraced feminism through real engagement with feminist issues and through solidarity with all women. It is only through this engagement that the earlier so improbable coupling of fashion and feminism will have a joint and resilient future.

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This chapter is rather ecclectic to its form: Encompassing a large number of feminist publications on fashion, it aims at showing the depth, width, and long-term engagement that feminisms have had with fashion, and vice versa, and it does so through a reading that is foremost textual. For structure, the chapter is divided in three interrelated parts, spanning over a longer period of time, and emphasizing some of the most important works that exist on fashion, women, and feminism, including Simone de Beauvoir's pivotal *The Second Sex* from 1947 and Elizabeth Wilson's now classic *Adorned in Dreams* from 1985. First, I will offer a historical account of the relationship between fashion and feminism, starting off with a discussion of the early (pre-feminist) critique of fashion which was articulated by leaders of the suffragette movement and how fashion later proved to be important for generating acceptance for that same movement. I then move on to discuss fashion's role for women's emancipation during the twentieth century while also considering the feminist critique of fashion as an embodied imprisonment and as a tactile form of patriarchal oppression.

The second part of this chapter discusses how (and why) fashion has been approached, debated, and understood by feminist scholars within and outside of the field of fashion studies, and here I engage with both "classic" and new research. This second part makes up the foundation for my third and last part, which is both more argumentative and tentative.

This last part offers a discussion of what fashion and feminism can "give" each other at a point in time when the fashion industry is under pressure to turn sustainable and ethical, and also, at a time when identity politics are being attacked from anti-democratic and extreme right-wing corners. I will be arguing that green feminism and a solidarian fashion politics have much to gain from joining forces, and that, indeed, "fashion is a feminist issue," as has been argued by communities TWYG and Collected Fashion Justice, among others.[1]

Early Struggles: Fashion as Imprisonment and/or Emancipation

> To preserve personal beauty, woman's glory! The limbs and faculties are cramped with worse than Chinese bands, and the sedentary life which they are condemned to live, whilst boys frolic in the open air, weakens the muscles … artificial notions of beauty, and false descriptions of sensibility have been early entangled with her motives of action.
>
> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of Women's Rights* (1792/1988: 55)

As this introductory quotation shows, the critique of women's objectification and constriction through fashion and beauty was part of early "pre-feminist" thinking, with Mary Wollstonecraft as one of its most fervent advocators. The relation between fashion and feminism, then, is nothing new: For a long, it has been understood as an oxymoron. One of the earliest and most evident instances when they did not meet ends was during the so-called Dress Reform movement. This movement started in the early nineteenth century in the United States in close connection to religious communities, and later developed in the United Kingdom, in France, in Germany, and in Scandinavia. It relied on medical and/or "pre-feminist" discourses, and in some cases, on classical art.[2] The movement saw mainstream and bourgeois fashion not only as (fake) beautification and artificiality, and as opposed to more desirable traits such as "utilitarity" and "naturalness," but also, as restrictive to women's physical mobility and as unhealthy and insanitary.[3] The popular corset, forming the female body into an unnatural S-shape, not only restricted women's mobility, it also caused inhalation problems, and in its extreme versions, it caused injuries to inner organs and to the bone structure. While men's clothing in the West became less frivolous in the early nineteenth century with the introduction of the suit marking (all) men as individuals and as subjects, the painful and deforming corset "served as an emblem of the power of culture to impose its designs on the female body."[4]

While the dress reform movement was met with critique from conventional corners, ridiculed in magazines such as the British magazine *Punch,* and its style considered as ugly, it later came to influence fashion designers such as Paul Poiret in the early twentieth century.[5] By then, certain progressive and modernist artist colonies, such as the Wiener Werkstätte in Vienna, and the arts and crafts movement in Britain, or single artists, like Mariano Fortuny in Italy, had been inspired by the more natural clothing styles proscribed by the reform—as well as by classical art. From the early 1910s, this ultimately "new" fashion image would allow for non-restrictive dress in certain corners of society—as exemplified via the early fashion photographs taken by Edward Steichen for the French magazine *Art et décoration* in 1911, displaying Poiret's latest creations.[6] Still, this physically liberating fashion existed side-by-side with the more conventional fashion of the time, a fashion that was still relying on the corset.

And while the suffrage movement, which had been initiated in the mid-nineteenth century, with Americans Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony as fervent advocators, was in favor of a healthy and liberating fashion, suffragists were also well aware of fashion's importance. In order to gain credibility and to be taken seriously—and not to upset men—it was a common strategy for women advocating for women's rights to dress in contemporary fashions so as to display their womanhood. This politically chosen fashionability (one which was rather moderate since most suffragettes probably supported and were aligned with the dress reform) must be understood as a conscious uniform, or as a kind of *social camouflage*.[7] Dressing fashionably was part of a conscious strategy adopted to pass under the radar as "true" women.[8] Any manifest break with the fashion code of the day would have meant running the risk of being suspectable, that is, being seen as mannish—as women trying to be like, or to become, men.[9] But the suffragists were also strategical in not giving in fully to fashion: Their use of certain colors was clearly a political choice that was both upfront and partly "hidden." For example, the color purple stood for loyalty and dignity, green stood for hope, and white stood for purity. Through their witty use of these three colors, suffragists could display and express their resistance while doing so within the acceptable trends and fashion of the time.

In a time when differences between the sexes were being fortified and men and women were understood to be each other's absolute opposites, suffragettes were well aware of how to play the role as "proper" women, all while demanding equality.[10] This social camouflage, or fashion masquerade, was probably also connected to the threat that lesbianism had started to pose in certain parts of bourgeois society. In the late nineteenth century, sexology had developed as a popular yet startling science attracting both clinical psychologists and physicians to investigate human sexuality. At focus for this new science were a variety of sexual "perversions," and while a few sexologists would argue for a de-criminalization of homosexuality, lesbianism (especially when expressed through "mannishness") was considered to be especially "threatening" to the sexual and social status quo. At the turn of the century, the fear of lesbianism was wide-spread and representations of lesbian (and other supposedly sexually ravening) women populated both popular culture and the arts.[11] And in the early twentieth century, the feared lesbian often aligned with the new and modern women.[12] While women who refused the feminine position ascribed to them were seen as threatening to men and to society, women who refused this position while also refusing men constituted the ultimate threat.

While adhering to social camouflage, and hence, to the act of "passing," (i.e. passing as *feminine* and hence, as unthreatening), some suffragettes did the opposite in their next to militant quest for equality, and so, they would break with normative femininity. For example, British suffragettes demonstrated loudly, smashing windows, burning pillar boxes, and chaining themselves to the gates of Buckingham Palace. Their acts were met with violent state repressions, but also, by mobs whose furious violence was not prevented.[13] The gap between a politics of peacefulness and a politics of confrontation—of "compliance" versus "militancy"—would later manifest itself, although in a less severe manner, in the civil rights and gay movements in the late 1960s.

In the early twentieth century, the suffrage movement and its struggles had proven successful as many countries decided to legislate women's right to vote. This accomplishment led to women gaining a new position in society, as men's political equals, and with this position came social, cultural, and economic possibilities. More and more women started to work outside of the home, taking up positions in a variety of different professions—and postponing marriage and child bearing. This changing gender structure was by some considered to be threatening to the social status quo, and conservative voices would worry over the way that society was becoming "feminized."[14] At the same time, it was being argued that women's new power and new position in society would lead to their masculinization, and hence, there was a fear of sexual difference being blurred—with feminine men and masculine women. Psychoanalyst Joan Riviere, in her essay "Womanliness as Masquerade" from 1929, identified this threat when describing how women felt the need to masquerade as feminine in order to avoid being punished by men when challenging their self-ascribed sovereignty.[15] Instances when feeling forced to masquerade were for example when appearing and engaging in male-dominated areas, or in everyday situations when physical strength or a certain technical know-how was called for. As we have seen with the suffragettes, following the current fashion style has also been crucial for masquerading as feminine women—alongside *performing* as feminine.[16] *Passing* as feminine, then, has been a conscious strategy to avoid castigation and retribution in times when their positions have moved forward.

As women became more publicly visible in society, and more needed in work life, the fashion image changed rapidly: In tandem with women's presence in the social and public arena, women's fashion transformed in ways that would forever change women's physical capacity to move. The female silhouette changed from the stiff and corseted S-shaped body to a leaner, freer, and more boyish body, one that Caroline Evans has referred to as a "modernist body."[17] The suffocating corset made out of whale bone now became redundant, and the skirts started to become shorter.[18] In the 1920s, dresses and skirts moved up to the knee, and a flat silhouette was desired, leaving women room to breathe normally, and to move about freely without any impediment constricting their bodies. Their new social, political, and economic freedom, was thus supported by their physical freedom. Fashion was no longer a physical prison, but rather, an expression of freedom. Yet, as Ilya Parkins has pointed out, this newly won freedom was indeed circumscribed by a new kind of dominant visibility that made modern femininity into a spectacle and women into objects of spectacularizing: The increased circulation of fashion photographs and fashion plates, available to everyone, helped promote modern femininity and the modern woman as spectacle.[19] Fashion, she writes, has the power to transform how women are being represented, but more so, it has the power to transform "perceptions of women's *being*."[20]

It is also important to remember that women historically have been excluded from the fine arts such as painting, sculpture, and architecture, and that "*couture* enabled them to be both creative designers and businesswomen."[21] Fashion, then, made it possible for them not only to express their artistry, but also, to work professionally. As creators and producers of fashion, they could have their own income, and, for those who worked in "high fashion," their own business. These were only a small number: Most women who worked in the industry as seamstresses and textile workers were less fortunate, slaving away (as they still do).[22] Still, we may assume that crucial to women's new freedom was their commercial power. With capitalism and faster production rates of cheaper merchandise, an outspread "consumptionism" started to pervade society at the beginning of the twentieth century and this came to engulf everybody, not least women.[23] Anne Friedberg has described how it was not until women—as *flâneuses*—were free to roam the streets on their own that they became full subjects, and that their subjecthood "was equated with the privilege of shopping."[24] Friedberg points out the department store (and the movie theatre) was targeted towards women as a consumption mecca where they could roam freely to partake in consumerist practices. Women's new position was thus in part equated with their capacity to shop—that is, to help sustain capitalism.[25] The new and consuming woman, then, was defined by her social and economic class—yet we need again to remember that it was women of the middle and upper classes who got to enjoy this freedom, whereas working class women were left to producing and selling the artifacts (and fashions), and that some of them slaved away being locked up in factories and working long hours for very low wages.[26]

Women's increasing presence in society, not least through their new status as political and as working subjects, but also, as consuming subjects, all tallied with the changes that occured in fashion. Women's new freedom was both supported and spectacularized by a fashion that enabled physical mobility (and visibility). This mobility was later to be repressed during the post World War II era when men were back from the front and women were—after a period of acting as breadwinners—forced back into the kitchen. The late 1940s and most of the 1950s offered a social and economic backlash for women: Society at large turned more conservative as traditional family values were being advocated, leaving less room again for women to build careers and enjoy an economic freedom outside of the constellation of the family.[27] As Janet Chafetz and Anthony Dworkin have pointed out, feminist movements have often been followed by a backlash, and the timing, extent, and form of the backlash may differ due to the success of feminism, but the backlash always have one focus, the family.[28]

In 1949, two years after Dior's first and influential fashion show, dictating an overtly effeminate fashion that must be understood as a kind of nostalgic backlash in terms of women's physical (and social) freedom, philosopher Simone de Beauvoir published her classic *Le deuxième sexe,* analyzing how patriarchal society constructed women as the "other sex" (hence preceding social constructionism that came to dominate feminist theories in the late twentieth century).[29] Most pertinent is her analysis of how society coerces women into an ambivalent position from which they are forced to see and treat themselves as objects, and not as subjects. For this object construction, fashion plays a crucial part, because it is *appearing* as feminine that counts. De Beauvoir argued that much fashion, e.g., bounded feet, long crinolines, corsets, and high heels, had been designed to prevent women to act physically. In sum, she argued that women were forever caught in immanence (i.e., caught in the domestic, private domain and subjected to the limitation in freedom), at least as long as patriarchy was to be the rule.[30]

In retrospect, it is almost impossible not to read some of her passages as a direct response to the effeminate fashions that Dior made popular, and which helped shape representations of women in fashion media and in popular culture at large. Women were again, to speak with Parkins, *spectacularized*—but now without the kind of physical (and social) freedom that they had enjoyed during earlier decades. This period, however, was rather short lived: With the 1960s came new social and political movements connected to solidarity and freedom for everyone, and these would soon inspire fashion which once more becomes liberating, but also, less gender specific.[31] Following the 1960s and the progress that the political movements of freedom had gained in society, various feminist theories started to develop in close conjunction with feminist grass root movements. Much inspired de Beauvoir, many feminist scholars of the 1960s and the 1970s, took on a critical view of fashion as oppressive to women.[32] Andrea Dworkin, in 1974, wrote that: "In our culture not one part of a women's body is left untouched, unaltered … From head to toe, every feature of a woman's face, every section of her body, is subject to modification," clearly implicating fashion as a crucial modification tool.[33] In the mid-1980s and in the 1990s, a feminist re-evaluation of fashion took place with a more embracing and positive, yet openly ambivalent, attitude towards fashion.[34]

In hindsight, it stands without a doubt that these thinkers' work has been fundamental for the very establishment of fashion studies as a proper academic field in its own right. Let me now turn to discuss feminist fashion scholarship and how our field has proved fruitful for the overall relationship between fashion and feminism.

Feminist Fashion Scholarship

> Secrecy – addiction – obsession: these words gesture towards our feeling that a love of fashion is not quite respectable.
>
> Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (1985: 229)

This introductory quotation by Wilson points at the ambivalence that many individuals, "caught between addicts and puritans," may feel in relation to fashion. This ambivalent sentiment is reminiscent of the relationship many feminists—myself included—have with popular culture, and perhaps especially with popular film and other visual media. This ambivalence, of course, has turned out productive for feminist scholars and scholarship. Investigating and exploring dominant cultural phenomena that one hates to love may indeed be constructive, as seen in the important work produced by a string of feminist philosophers, sociologists, and film and media scholars.[35] For feminist fashion scholars, this ambivalence (or paradox) makes possible a critical perception of fashion as a gendered phenomenon that serves both to reinforce and/or upset gender difference, while also allowing for a more creative stance that sees fashion practices in terms of alternatives.[36] To understand fashion "as merely one aspect of the oppression of women, is fatally to oversimplify," writes Wilson, since "dress is never primarily functional," nor "natural."[37] Furthermore, to understand fashion only as a form of capitalism and as "forced" consumerism, is to "fail to understand that women and men may use the 'unworthiest' items of capitalist culture to *criticize and transcend* that culture."[38] Fashion, then, can be understood to be subversive: Fashion is a practice that can serve to question, resist and counter what is normative.

It is no coincidence that I open this section with a quote from *Adorned in Dreams*: In fact, any discussion or analysis of fashion and women, as well as of feminism's role in fashion studies, must refer to this book. It is the first proper scholarly work on fashion's relation to feminism, and to gender. As such, it has inspired fashion studies as an academic field when being formed in the decades following its publication, and it is still used as a "primary" source. What Wilson did was to raise questions about fashion's role in modern society, and so, *Adorned in Dreams* came to open the door for feminist fashion scholarship. And in our field, the feminist perspectives are affluent. Feminist scholars take on a critical position that is flexible, often self-reflective—and that allows for a critical reading of fashion from a variety of stand points.

Central to most feminist critique of, and engagement with, fashion as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon is the way fashion (as both visual representation and as material dress) has served to emphasize women in terms of *bodies*. Yet, the evaluating focus on women's bodies in terms of shape and weight does not only characterize fashion, it is ingrained in all parts of hegemonic and patriarchal culture. The female body has for long constituted a target for a severe disciplinary power, and women's bodies have been subjugated and oppressed due to their physical difference.[39] Phallocentric ideologies, based on notions that sexual difference naturally produces different social positions for men and women, serve to support women's suppressed and inferior position vis-à-vis men.[40] Hence, the critical analysis of the mind/body dualism that has governed Western thought since Plato, via Christianity and up to René Descartes, has proven productive for feminist scholars at large.[41] But rather few of these feminist thinkers have taken the clothed body into consideration, hence omitting any proper theorization of what clothes (and fashion) actually do to and for the embodied experience.

In 2008, Ilya Parkins critiqued the fact that very few feminist scholars in disciplines other than fashion clearly were uninterested in exploring issues of fashion. This fact was surely, understandable, at least in hindsight: Inter- or cross-disciplinarity still constitutes an uncertain territory for most scholars, and as a scholar one is always tainted by one's discipline. While fashion scholars see the necessity of studying fashion from a feminist standpoint, we cannot assume that most feminist scholars would find fashion to be of special importance in relation to other aspects of social life. When Sandra Lee Bartky and Dorothy E. Smith in the late 1980s and early 1990s studied how women were brought up and socialized into incorporating and becoming *docile* bodies, they aimed for the bigger picture, within which fashion makes up only one aspect among many others.[42] Likewise, when Teresa de Lauretis published her work on how gender is produced through various "gender technologies," she did not focus on fashion per se, yet it is easy to see how fashion—together with e.g. film and media—is highly relevant for her critique.[43] Like Bartky and Smith, she builds on Foucauldian notions of technologies of sexuality while adding gender to his rather gender-blind meditations. Fashion, which makes part of the larger representative and visual system that she discusses, serves to instruct individuals how to act and "be" in their assigned gender, i.e. instructing them how to pass as "straight" and as correct in their gender. These technologies work in tandem with and are forceful expressions of a power structure that is both heteronormative and dualist.

Since fashion is connected to gender, much of the scholarship conducted in our field has taken gender into account. Most scholars are, if not feminist, highly aware of and well-read in gender and feminist theory, but also, in queer theory.[44] In fact, like fashion itself, and like feminism, fashion scholarship is often "obsessed" with gender.[45] Fashion is an expression of gender: Even in our contemporary times with unisex-fashion guiding the fashion image, gender is still inscribed in its representation, and in its products. Whether fashion is emphasizing or blurring gender differences, gender is fashion's unavoidable reference point. Therefore, any feminist scholar should find fashion worth of study—and possibly more so now than before. As Parkins wrote in 2018, some ten years after having laid bare the "frustrating divide, a major gap"[46] between fashion and feminist theory:

> If there were ever a moment for feminist studies to take on fashion, this would be it. Over the last couple of years, the industry has framed itself as a diversity vanguardist—with an especially visible promotion of transgender and non-binary, and fat or 'plus-size', models. Pointed invocations of feminism appear regularly at couture houses like Chanel and Dior, trickling down to affordable mass like ASOS and sitting uneasily with the wider cultures of conspicuous luxury consumption and white slenderness that frame them. It is surely tempting to dwell in this stratum of the fashion system but feminist scholars will find it more fruitful to look beyond the industry's own self-fashioning and *the attendant risk of becoming mired in stale debates about fashion's feminist credentials*.[47]

And surely, if fashion as a phenomenon worthy of critical engagement has attracted few feminist scholars in other disciplines up until now, then the fashion industry's apparent and opportunist hijacking of feminism should call us all to action. Feminist expressions printed on t-shirts and pins as a direct and loud critique of Trump coming to power in 2017, was later adopted by Parisian fashion houses and printed on t-shirts, jackets, and dresses.[48] While slogans like "We should all be feminists" (resonating Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's book from 2014) and "Our Minds Our Bodies Our Power" made perfect sense at the political marches organized against Trump, they surely lost their political edge as radical protest on the catwalk. Parkins writes: "At its best, feminist fashion scholarship demonstrates that fashion is a *powerful methodological tool* that allows us to home in on urgent questions in ways that are always in some sense materialist, always gendered, always alert to temporal and affective complexity, and always attuned to the operation of capitalism and its consequences."[49] It would be hard for most of us to disagree on this. Her urging us all to "home in on urgent questions" is indeed aligned with a critique of what is referred to as postfeminism, a state that is indeed dubious: Besides pretending that we are now all equal and that feminism is no longer needed, its assumed whiteness and heterosexuality, i.e., its lacking interest in difference, is highly problematic.[50] Adding "post" to feminism, as has been argued by Angela McRobbie among others, undermines feminisms' endeavors to achieve equality, while giving the impression that gender equality has now been achieved.[51] In *The Aftermath of Feminism,* McRobbie shows how consumer and popular culture may appear to be supportive of women's freedom, but that they in fact imprison women into new post-feminist dependencies, fostering eating disorders and body anxiety.[52]

Here, the rather new emphasis on body positivism makes a both vivid and resistant part of a feminist stance today, and this is a political positivism that often explores the possible joys of fashion and dress, as for example seen in knitting and dressmaking movements.[53] In encompassing all kinds of bodies, these movements serve to question the restricted body ideals that mainstream fashion has always prescribed. Body positivists use and enjoy fashion to oppose and counter these ideals, expanding the representation and the very existence of what a joyful body may look and be like. Perhaps is it in movements like these that the feminist critique of, and engagement with, fashion is at its most subversive—all along while encompassing it.

Body positivism shows us that the fight is not in any way over and that the "post-feminist sensibility" has not set us free. Postfeminism, in fact, is nothing but a conceited and illusive disavowing of the very necessity for feminism. If we are *post* feminism, then we are all equal, and we "can have it all." Well, that is surely not the case: Body anxieties continue to hurt women of all ages and women's freedom is currently being circumscribed in many parts of the world, and not only in cultures that are considered to be anti-democratic. Further, social and economic divides are increasing, not only between the Global South and the Global North but also within these geographical spaces. Furthermore, the climate crisis causes detrimental effects and while they are damaging everywhere, it is the already vulnerable areas and their inhabitants that are hit the worst.[54] This leads me over to my last section in which I will try and bring together feminism, fashion, and solidarity.

Fashion: A Feminist and Solidarian Practice?

Questions consumers need to ask are: How did that top, skirt dress or jacket get to me? What was its actual cost? Who made it? Were they paid fairly? Or at all? Were

> they free to leave? Because, while globalisation has brought us closer together, it also has increased the gulf that divides us. And it's into that gulf so many women are falling, and feminism is failing.
>
> Grace Forrest, *The Australian* (June 2, 2021)

In the past decades, fashion's impact on the environment has increasingly been highlighted and critiqued, which has led sections of the fashion industry to proclaim themselves as pro-sustainable, eco-friendly, and pro-equality. But since the industry is all about making profit, there is reason to suspect that these performances are just a façade, and that their work on sustainability and equality is no more than green-washing.[55] It (still) all boils down to producing and selling more and more products, and so, flaunting awareness about and care for sustainability, solidarity, and equality has become an empty marketing tool. The industry's carelessness and cynicism became perhaps most apparent when the CEO of one of the world's most successful (and controversial) fast fashion companies—the Swedish brand H&M—in January 2022 announced that they aim at *doubling their sales by 2030*, while willingly admitting that "It is well known that there is no more land to grow cotton in Asia" and that "This has been known for a long time."[56] This is, surely, an equation that is bad to the bone, and one that illustrates an unabashed will to exploit.[57] If the industry already has drained and killed large areas of land, making it useless for centuries to come—how on earth can they advocate for an increased production (and for continuing to drain the remaining resources)? Recycling—which in their hands is nothing but a green washing practice—has disastrous effects on the environment and on textile workers: The only way to hinder a complete disaster is to *thoroughly reduce* production all together, and to minimize sales.[58]

Sustaining a capitalistic and exploitative system, the fashion industry as we know it must cease to be. This feminist fashion practioners and students all agree on: social and ecological "improvements" such as recycling and circular fashion systems are not enough. What needs to be changed, or strangled, is the entire system—and it needs to be strangled now because our planet's natural resources and eco-systems are under complete seizure. Hence, today's feminist fashion awareness is intimately tied to an awareness about the rapidly growing climate change and about the effects of global warming—and how the fashion industry contributes to this ruinous pathway.

This awareness is not new: Already in 1985, Wilson pointed out that "the dreadful exploitation of garment workers throughout the world is a reality, and feminists should support campaigns against it."[59] And long before her, in the early twentieth century, feminists and activists protested against the working conditions for (women) textile workers in sweatshops, and so, they laid the path for today's feminist activism. Through protests and campaigns, they managed to change some of the conditions and to regulate wages so that women's work life could improve. Surely, not enough was being made, this history has taught us, but we should take this as an inspiration. If feminists could exert pressure and change the status quo more than a hundred years ago, just imagine what we can do today, considering the easiness with which we can connect and mobilize, and considering the actual power that we hold as consumers. And we have to do it for those who cannot: For those textile workers who run the risk of being beaten up if they dare to demand better work conditions and a liveable salary.[60] This equation is simple: Without us feeding into the (fast) fashion industry and into neo-liberal, free-market capitalism, they must self-destruct. The caring for others is, still, *a feminist act.*

To understand fashion "as merely one aspect of the oppression of women, is fatally to oversimplify," wrote Wilson back in 1985. Furthermore, to understand fashion only as a form of capitalism and as "forced" consumerism is to "fail to understand that women and men may use the 'unworthiest' items of capitalist culture to *criticize and transcend* that culture" (my emphasis) since "dress is never primarily functional," nor "natural."[61] Some 35 years later, this quote, although still inspiring when it comes to fashion's power to transcend normativity, does not hold the same aptitude. The real horrors of capitalism are killing the planet. And while capitalism has always been critiqued for its exploitation of workers, in our own era this critique involves the systemized exploitation of the Global South.[62] The extinction of large areas in the Global South through over-production and exploitation of natural sources, is, as Hop Hopkins' states, a blunt expression of racism and white supremacy.[63] And the Global South is moving closer to the Gobal North: Today we see more and more areas in the Global North that are suffering severely from toxic pollution, with cancerous illnesses and unusable, contaminated soils as a result.[64] What capitalism has done to our natural environment in less than 200 years, constantly driving and increasing both over-production and over-consumption, while greedily utilizing both human and natural resources, is inhumane. That capitalism is still allowed to bloom despite the fact that we have now reached (beyond) the tipping point is beyond comprehension. As argues economist Richard D. Wolff in Andrew Morgan's documentary *The True Cost* from 2015: It is not enough to improve the situation for people who are exploited in the industry, what we need is a *complete* change of system: Exchanging capitalism for a more sustainable, solidarian and equal system that will allow for everyone to live a *liveable* life.

Where fashion and feminism must meet today, then, is in this critical stance, and in the demand for solidarity with women (and children and men) whose lives are being oppressed and circumscribed and who are relentlessly exploited for profit. Our fashion practices, then, must turn political: To refuse supporting the economical system of which mainstream fashion is part, to explore green alternatives through reduce and reuse, and to take sides with democratic, anti-racist movements. A first step is to refuse consuming cheap fashion (and other products), to refuse "consumptionism," because this will make production suffocate. And if this step brings to the fore questions of whether the Global South will be able to support themselves if their work opportunities are taken away, then think about the gargantuan profits that have been made and continue to be made by the brutal and racist exploitation of these workers—and how a solidarian, equal economic system can contribute to a more equal relation between the North and the South.

We also need to remind ourselves that fashion—in its materiality—can function as a political and feminist tool: The suffragettes used fashion strategically to further their cause, and in 2017, feminists would wear pink pussy hats next to their slogans to express their severe critique against Trump. In Russia, the *balaclava* was worn by Russian feminist punk band Pussy Riot for critiquing Vladimir Putin and his fascist and anti-democratic politics through various kinds of activist performances. These protests are of course very different from those fashion protests that have been appropriated by the fashion industry in later years: The feminist slogans printed on garments displayed on catwalks (and sold to the few who can afford then), claiming to be on the side of feminism (and in its conjunction, on the side of anti-racist and LGBTQ-movements), are highly ambiguous. And while they may be understood as being "situated in a space where neoliberal cooptation and the manifestation of political solidarity overlap,"[65] I firmly believe that the hijacking of social protest, just like postfeminism, risks undermining feminisms' endeavours to achieve equality.[66]

Conclusion

Throughout the past 170 years, fashion and feminism have often positioned themselves against each other—yet, they have also inspired and supported each other at certain points in time. And while much feminist critique has been directed towards fashion, the establishment of fashion studies has proven to be a fruitful ground for bringing fashion and feminism together.

In a now pivotal article, Hazel Clark asked whether fashion and "slow" constitute an oxymoron.[67] She argued that we need to widen the notion of fashion so that it too can include the slow, the local, the hand-made. Through a few case studies, Clark showed that if we leave the dominant linear fashion system behind to invent another one, one that does not thrive on constant newness and greed, we can have a sustainable fashion production. Central to her hopeful vision was the development of closer relations between producer and consumer and various ways to recycle, redesign and reuse what already exists—practices for which women were central. Ten years later, she proposes a development of this slow fashion discourse, one that "respects and is informed by feminine strategies and values, or what I am choosing to call women's wisdom," and drawing from and valuing "the long-established existence of beliefs and methods common to women that can also pre-date and transcend capitalism, modernity, and Eurocentricity, and which are not formed on the basis of patriarchy."[68] Aligning herself with other scholars who work on fashion and sustainability issues,[69] Clark argues that we need a "shift in worldview to challenge the fashion status quo," implementing different economics, business models, values and processes—and that women's wisdom (that is, feminism), will help foster such a shift.[70]

Where feminism and fashion need to meet today is in what I would simply term *green feminism*. This inclusive feminism is much aligned with eco-feminism and is characterized by a sense of solidarity and a care for the other (and for the self), together with a humane activism on all fronts. It is also aligned with democratic, anti-fascist, and LGBTQ politics and movements. A green feminism is encompassing and solidarian, and it is the only possible way forward—if we want to save the planet and life, others' and ours. In the face of greedy capitalism, toxic masculinities, neo-fascism, racism, extreme conservatism, nationalism, misogyny, homophobia, and planet destruction, feminists of all genders have so very much to join forces over. This is why we should all be feminists.

Notes

1 See Nabila Kareem, "Why Fashion is a Feminist Issue", on TWYG. https://twyg.co.za/why-fashion-is-a-feminist-issue/. Last visited on August 17, 2022. See also Emma Hakansson, "5 reasons fashion is a feminist issue", https://www.collectivefashionjustice.org/articles/5-reasons-fashion-is-a-feminist-issue. Last visited on August 17, 2022.

2 Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: Virago Press, 1985), 208–11.

3 See Wilson and Patrik Steorn,"Konstnärligt anti-mode: Reformdräkt i Sverige kring sekelskiftet 1900", in *MODE, en introduktion: en tvärvetenskaplig betraktelse,* eds. Dirk Gindt and Louise Wallenberg (Stockholm: Raster förlag, 2009). See also Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming Women's fashion, 1850–1920: Politics, Health and Art* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2003), and Ana Stevenson, "'Bloomers' and the British World: Dress Reform in Transatlantic and Antipodean Print Culture, 1851–1950", in *The Journal of the Social History and Society* vol. 15, no. 5 (2017), 621–46.

4 Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*: *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 143.

5 *Punch Magazine,* inaugurated in 1841, often included satirical cartoons depicting fashion as a way to comment on the current state of affairs in the UK, with normative and mainstream (and middle- and upper class) women's fashion, and hence, women, being the real but of the joke. For a critical reading of *Punch*, see Andrea Kollnitz, "Is Beauty Useless? Fashion, Gender, and British Wartime Society in *Punch* Magazine, 1915", in *Fashion, Society and the First World War: International Perspectives,* eds. Maude Bass-Krueger et al. (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 303, 288–308. DOI: 10.5040/9781350119895.ch-019. About the satirical depiction of "new women" in *Punch*, see Tracy J. R. Collins, "Athletic Fashion, 'Punch', and the Creation of the New Woman", in *Victorian Periodicals Review* 43, no. 3 (2010), 309–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41038818.

6 See e.g. Mary E. Davis, "Re-fashioning the Fashion Plate: Poiret's Clothing in Context", in *Poiret*, eds. Harold Coda and Andrew Bolton (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 35–6; and Paul Martineau, *Icons of Style: A Century of Fashion Photography* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2018).

7 Alison Matthews David, "Fashion's chameleons: Camouflage, 'Conspicuousness', and gendered display during World War I", in *The Places and Spaces of Fashion,* ed. John Potvin (New York: Routledge, 2009), 92–121.

8 Cally Blackman writes 'In 1908, the suffragette newspaper *Votes For Women* declared, "The suffragette of today is dainty and precise in her dress," and five years later, sellers of *The Suffragette* newspaper were requested to "dress themselves in their smartest clothes".' See Blackman, "How the suffragettes used fashion to further their cause". https://www.stylist.co.uk/fashion/suffragette-movement-fashion-clothes-what-did-the-suffragettes-wear/188043. Last visited February 2, 2022.

9 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*. On fashion as social camouflage, see Matthews David, "Fashion's chameleons". Wilson descibes how American suffragists like Amelia Bloomer (after whom the 'bloomers'—a pair of Turkish style trousers worn under a wide tunic—were named) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were forced to to abandon their bloomers 'since it caused so much ridicule of the feminist cause for which they were fighting', setting 'up a link between feminims and mannishness'. Wilson, "Utopian Dress and Dress Reform", in *Adorned in Dreams,* 209.

10 See e.g. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

11 See Bram Djikstra, *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996) and *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

12 In *Punch Magazine*, the "new woman" was implicitly aligned with lesbianism in the cartoons made of her. See Angelique Richardson, ed., *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890–1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), xxxiv.

13 See Sylvia Waldby, "Backlash in Historical Context", in *Making Connections: Women's Studies, Women's Movements, Women's Lives*, eds. Mary Kennedy, Cathy Lubelska and Val Walsh (London: Taylor and Francis, 1993).

14 See e.g. Louise Wallenberg, "Stilleristic Women: Gender Ambivalence in the Films of Mauritz Stiller", in *Aura: Filmvetenskaplig tidskrift* no. 4 (Stockholm, 2000).

15 Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade", in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929), 303–13.

16 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

17 Caroline Evans, *The Mechanical Smile. Modernism and the First Fashion Shows in France and America 1900–1929* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013).

18 The laced corset was not thrown out over night, however, it was constituted by softer body-shaping underwear. Also, while the corsetless body as an ideal was introduced already in the early 1910s, it would take up until 1914 that it had its breakthrough. See Evans, *The Mechanical Smile*, 201–14.

19 Ilya Parkins, *Poiret, Dior and Schiaparelli: Fashion, Femininity and Modernity* (London: Berg, 2012).

20 Ibid., 36 (Original emphasis).

21 Evans and Minna Thornton, "Fashion, Representation, Femininity", in *Feminist Review* no 38 (Summer, 1991), 48–66. Quotation on page 53.

22 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*; Nancy Green, *Ready-to-Wear, Ready-to-Work; A Century of Industry and Immigrants in Paris and New York* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997);

Louise Wallenberg and Torkild Thanem, "Beyond Fashion's Alluring Surface: Connecting the Fashion Image and the Lived Realities of Female Workers in the Fashion Industry", in *Bodies, Symbols and Organizational Practice: The Gendered Dynamics of Powers*, ed. Agnes Bolsoe et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

23 Samuel Strauss [1925] in William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

24 Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 36.

25 Anke Gleber has pointed out how the new flaneuse, with her license to shop and roaming "the interiors of capitalist consumption" in fact "represent little more than a bourgeois variant of domesticized flanerie". See Gleber, "Female Flanerie and the Symphony of the City", in ed. Katharina von Ankum, *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of Californa Press, 1997), 71.

26 Angela McRobbie, "Bridging the Gap: Feminism, Fashion and Consumption", in *Feminist Review* vol. 55, no. 1 (1997), 73–89. DOI:10.1057/fr.1997.4

27 Single women with children were doubly punished in the US in the 1950s. See Ellen Reese, "The 1950s Welfare Backlash and Federal Complicity", in *Backlash against Welfare Mothers: Past and Present* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

28 Janet Chafetz Saltzman and Anthony Gary Dworkin, "In the Face of Threat: Organized Antifeminism in Comparative Perspective", in *Gender and Society* vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1987), 33–60. Susan Faludi, in *Backlash*, has problematized the backlash that women and feminism expriened in the late twentieth century, following feminism's success and women's advances since after the 1950s. Like Chafetz and Dworkin, she understands backlash to be an occurrent phenomenon whenever feminism and feminists make advances. See Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War against American Women* (New York: Crown, 1991).

29 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (orig. *Le deuxième sexe*, 1949), translated by H. M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957). On de Beauvoir and the differentiation between sex and gender, see Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex", in *Yale French Studies*, no. 72 (1986), 35–49.

30 On immanence, see e.g. Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence. A Life …", in *Theory, Culture and Society* vol. 14, no. 2 (1997), 3–7. Originally published as 'L'immanence: une vie …' in *Philosophie* no 47 (September 1995), 3–7.

31 See e.g. Patrik Steorn, "'Men can be attractive and a little sexy' … Swedish unisex fashion in the 1960s and 1970s", in *Nordic Fashion Studies*, eds. Peter McNeil and Louise Wallenberg (Stockholm: AXL Books, 2012).

32 See e.g. Una Stannard, "The Mask of Beauty", in *Woman in Sexist Society*, eds. Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran (New York: Basic Books, 1971), 118–13; Stannard, "Clothing and Sexuality", in *Sexual Behaviour* no. 1 (1971), 25–33; Nancy Baker, 1984. *The Beauty Trap: Exploring Woman's Greatest Obsession* (F. Watts, 1984); and Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (New York: Linden Press, 1984).

33 Andrea Dworkin, *Women Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974), 113–14.

34 See e.g. Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*; Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (London: Berg Publishers, 1986); and Caroline Edwards, Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton, *Women and Fashion: A New Look* (Quartet Books, 1989).

35 See e.g. Marjorie Rosen, *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies and the American Dream* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973); Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: the Treatment of Women in the Movies* (London: New English Library, 1974); Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in *Screen* vol. 16, no 3 (1975), 6–18. doi: 10.1093/screen/16.3.6; Kaja Silverman, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse" (orig. 1986), in *On Fashion*, eds. Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1987); Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Diana Fuss, "Fashion and the Homospectatorial Look," in *Critical Inquiry* vol. 18, no 4 (Summer, 1992), 713–737; Benstock and Ferris, eds. *On Fashion*; Joanne Hollows and Rachel Moseley, *Feminism in Popular Culture* (London: Berg Publishers, 2005); Angela McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Consumption* (London: Sage, 2009);

Rosalind Gill, *Gender and the Media*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2007); Gill, "Post-Postfeminism?: New Feminist Visibilities in Postfeminist Times," in *Feminist Media Studies* vol. 14, no 4 (2016), 610–30. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2016.1193293; Adrienne Trier Bieneik et al., eds., *Feminist Theory and Popular Culture* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2015); and Sarah Banet-Weiser et al., "Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Weiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation," in *Feminist Theory* vol. 21, no 1 (2020), 3–24.

36 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 245. Wilson writes: "The pointlessness of fashion, what Veblen hated, is precisely what makes it valuable. It is in this marginalized area of the contingent, the decorative, the futile, that not simply a new aesthetics but a new cultural order may seed itself," 245.

37 Ibid., 244.

38 Ibid. My emphasis.

39 Angela King, "The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body", in *Journal of International Women's Studies* vol. 5, no. 2 (March 2004), 29–39.

40 See Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which Is Not One* (orig. 1977), translated by Catherine Porter. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender*; Laqueur, *Making Sex*; Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

41 See e.g. Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*; Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Ros Diprose, *The Bodies of Women: Ethics, Embodiment and Sexual Difference* (London: Routledge, 1994); Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*; Grosz, "Darwin and Feminism: Preliminary Investigations for a Possible Alliance," in *Australian Feminist Studies* vol. 14, no. 29 (1999), 31–4; Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price, *Vital Signs: Feminist Reconfigurations of the Bio/logical Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Toril Moi, *What is a Woman? And Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing like. A Girl and other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), doi:10.1093/0195137345.001.0001; Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999); and Weiss, "The Normal, the Natural, and the Normative: A Merleau-Pontian Legacy to Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Disability Studies," in *Continental Philosophy Review* vol. 48, no. 1 (2015), 77–93. Doi:10.1007/s11007-014-9316-y

42 See Bartky, *Femininity and Domination* and Dorothy E. Smith, *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990).

43 de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender*.

44 For feminist takes on fashion, see Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*; Edwards, Evans and Thornton, *Women and Fashion*; Evans and Thornton, "Fashion, Representation, Femininity"; Rebecca Arnold, "Fashion", in *Feminist Visual Culture*, eds. Fiona Carson and Claire Pajaczkowska (London: Routledge, 2016); Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety* (London: Berg Publisher, 2001); Young, *On Female Body Experience*; Ilya Parkins, "Building a feminist theory of fashion: Karan Barad's Agential Realism", in *Australian Feminist Studies* vol. 35, no. 58 (2008), 501–15; Parkins, "Introduction: Fashion and Feminist Politics of the Present", in *Australian Feminist Studies* vol. 33, no. 98 (2018), 423–7; Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory* (London: Polity Press, 2000); Entwistle and Wilson, *Body Dressing* (London: Berg Publishers, 2001); Pamela Church Gibson, "Redressing the Balance: Patriarchy, Postmodernism, and Feminism", in *Fashion Cultures: Theories, Exploration, and Analysis,* eds. Stella Bruzzi and Pamela Church Gibson (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Barbara Vinken, *Fashion Zeitgeist* (London: Berg Publishers, 2004); Linda Scott, *Fresh Lipstick: Redressing Fashion and Feminism* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2005); Llewllyn Negrin, "Feminism and Fashion", in *Appearance and Identity: Fashioning the Body in Postmodernity* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 33–52; Ashley Mears, "Discipline of the Catwalk", in *Ethnography* vol. 9, no. 4 (2008), 429–56; Entwistle and Elizabeth Wissinger, *Fashioning Models: Image, Text and Industry* (London: Berg Publishers, 2012). For queer takes on fashion, see e.g. Shaun Cole, "*Don we now our gay apparel*". *Gay men's dress in the twentieth century* (London: Berg, 2000); Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, *Fashion*

and Masculinities in Popular Culture (London: Routledge, 2018); Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Wallenberg, "Men in Boots: On Spectacular Masculinity and its Desublimation", in *Shoe Reels: The History and Philosophy of Footwear in Film,* eds. Elizabeth Ezra and Catherine Weathley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Wallenberg, "Lesbian Desire, Misandry, and Porno Violence in the Fashion Film, 2009–2012", in *Fashion, Performance and Performativity*, eds. Andrea Kollnitz and Marco Pecorari (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2022); Thanem and Wallenberg, "Buggering Freud and Deleuze: Towards A Queer Theory of Masochism", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Culture* vol. 2, no. 1 (2010), 1–10; Thanem and Wallenberg, "Just doing Gender? Transvestism and the Power of Underdoing Gender in Everyday Life and Work", in *Organization: The Critical Journal of Organization, Theory and Society* vol. 21, no. 1 (2015), 250–71; Ben Barry, "Fabulous Masculinities", in *Fashion Theory* vol. 23, no. 2 (2019), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2019.1567064; and Andrew Reilly and Barry, *Crossing Gender Boundaries: Fashion to Create, Disrupt and Transcend* (Bristol: Intellect, 2020).

45 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 117).

46 Parkins, "Building a feminist theory of fashion", 501.

47 Parkins, "Introduction: Fashion and Feminist Politics", 423 (My emphasis).

48 Monica Titton, "Afterthought: Fashion, Feminism and radical protest", in *Fashion Theory* vol. 23, no. 6 (2019), 747–56. DOI: 10.1080/1362704X.2019.1657273.

49 Parkins, "Introduction: Fashion and Feminist Politics," 423 (My emphasis).

50 Gill, "Post-Postfeminism?"; Banet-Weiser et al., "Postfeminism, popular feminism and neo-liberal feminism?".

51 McRobbie, "'Post-feminism and popular culture," in *Feminist Media Studies* vol. 4, no. 3 (2004), 255–64.

52 McRobbie, *The Aftermath of Feminism.*

53 See e.g. Jessica Bain, "'Darn right I'm a feminist ... Sew what?' The politics of contemporary home dressmaking: Sewing, slow fashion and feminism," in *Women's Studies International Forum*, no. 54 (2016), 57–66.

54 Eric Holthaus, "Why climate change is a civil rights battle," in *The Correspondent*, June 18, 2020. https://thecorrespondent.com/539/why-climate-change-is-a-civil-rights-battle/71356398421-19aef637; Hop Hopkins, "Racism is killing the planet: the Ideology of White supremacy leads the way to disposable people and a disposable natural world", in *Sierra: The National Magazine of the Sierra Club*, June 8, 2020; UN Climate Change Report 2022. The 2022 UN Climate Report states that 'Vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change differs substantially among and within regions, driven by patterns of intersecting socio-economic development, unsustainable ocean and land use, inequity, marginalization, historical and ongoing patterns of inequity such as colonialism and governance'. See IPCC, *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptations and Vulnerability. Summary for Policymakers*, p. 11. https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg2/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf. Last visited March 2, 2022.

55 See e.g. Mariko Takedomi Karlsson and Vasna Ramasar, "Selling women the green dream: the paradox of feminism and sustainability in fashion marketing", in *Journal of Political Ecology* vol. 27 (2020), 335–59; and Herman Stål, "Circular fashion: Moral effects and ethical implications," in *Fashion Ethics and Aesthetics,* eds. Louise Wallenberg and Andrea Kollnitz (London: Bloomsbury, 2022).

56 Jenny Petersson,"H&M siktar högt", interview with Helena Helmersson in *Dagens Industri*, January 28, 2022.

57 Two years earlier, the former CEO of that same company, Karl Johan Persson, recommended how 'we should not stop consuming since it leads to economic growth', hence putting economic growth for a few before the wellbeing of many. See Ida Yttergren, "H&M:s vd om klimatet," in *Dagens Nyheter*, January 1, 2019.

58 On greenwashing, see e.g. Herman Stål and Hervé Corvellec, "Organizing Means-Ends Decoupling: Core-Compartment Separations in Fast Fashion," in *Business & Society* vol. 61, no. 4 (2021), 857–85. doi.org/10.1177/00076503211001856; Gül Kaner, "Greenwashing: How Difficult It Is to Be Transparent to the Consumer-H&M Case Study", in *Green Marketing in Emerging Markets. Palgrave Studies of Marketing in Emerging Economies*, eds. C Mukonza et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030–74065-8_9

59 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 235.

60 Thanem and Wallenberg, "Beyond Fashion's Alluring Surface."
61 Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 244.
62 See Friedrich Engels, *The Working Conditions of the Working Class in England* (orig. 1845), (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1958) and Karl Marx, *Das kapital: Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Hamburg: Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1867). In *The Working Conditions*, Engels wrote: "[The girls] sit bent over their work and sew from four or five in the morning until midnight. Their health is ruined in a few years and they sink into an early grave, without having been able to earn the barest necessities of life," *The Working Conditions,* 239.
63 Hopkins, "Racism is killing the planet."
64 Morgan, *The True Cost*; Hopkins, "Racism is killing the planet"; Holthous, "Why climate change is a civil rights battle."
65 Titton, "Afterthought," 754.
66 McRobbie, "Post-feminism and popular culture."
67 Hazel Clark, "Slow + Fashion – an Oxymoron – or a Promise for the Future?", in *Fashion Theory* vol. 12, no. 4 (2008), 427–46. DOI: 10.2752/175174108×X346922.
68 Clark, "Slow+ Fashion: Women's Wisdom," in *Fashion Practice* vol. 11, no. 3 (2019), 309–27. Quotation on 309–10. DOI: 10.1080/17569370.2019.1659538.
69 See e.g. Sandy Black, *Eco Chic: The Fashion Paradox* (London: Black Dog, 2008); Black, *The Sustainable Fashion Handbook* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2012); Alison Gwilt and Timo Rissanen, *Shaping Sustainable Fashion Changing the Way We Make and Use Clothes* (London: Earthscan, 2011); Kate Fletcher and L. Grose, *Fashion & Sustainability: Design for Change* (London: Laurence King, 2012); Fletcher, *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013); Fletcher, *Craft of Use: Post-Growth Fashion* (London: Routledge, 2016); and Fletcher and Mathilda Tham, *Earth Logic. Fashion Action Research Plan* (London: the J.J. Charitable Trust, 2019).
70 Clark, "Slow+Fashion: Women's Wisdom," 313.

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Films

The True Cost (Andrew Morgan, USA, 2015).

11 Fascism for Export

Fashion and Textiles in 1930s Italy

Eugenia Paulicelli

> The same kind of critical method with which we approach a novel, a poem, or when we write a review of a film or drama should also be adopted when we approach the so little studied field of fashion. We should pay, that is, attention to fashion as a language, as a witty manifestation of form, as one of the several ways in which the physiognomy of a people or an epoch shows itself.
>
> (Gianna Manzini, in *La Donna,* 1935)[1]

Introduction

The above quotation from an article written by author and journalist Gianna Manzini in one of Italy's most well-known magazines of the 1930s, *La Donna,* offers me the opportunity to make some introductory remarks on the complexity of fashion culture and the fashion industry during the fascist regime. Manzini's article, "Fashion is a serious business" (*La moda è una cosa seria*), presents a series of reasons why fashion is a field worthy of study and of sharing equal dignity with the study of more traditional or well-established disciplines. Manzini's argument is quite revolutionary, considering that even today a debate among the academic disciplines about where to position the study of fashion is ongoing. Although quite rare given the regime's misogynistic ideology, women like Gianna Manzini existed in fascist Italy and were part of a creative group of innovators who both lived with and contradicted the diktats of a totalitarian regime whose aims were to annihilate individual agency and women's subjectivity. These tensions are particularly visible in fashion.[2] In fact, fashion and fascism are not without similar contradictions.

Under fascism, fashion was indeed a serious business becoming a state sanctioned affair with the founding of institutions—such as the Ente Nazionale della Moda (1932 and 1934, ENM) that for the first time in post-unified Italy were charged with the "nationalization" of fashion and the oversight of the "italianità" of textiles, design, etc. Dress and style took center stage during fascism feeding the project of fascistizing the masses. Fashion and dress gave the abstract concept/project of nationalizing and fascistizing the masses a concrete and tangible quality. One of the most visible examples is the tension between the civil uniforms invented by fascism and bourgeois fashion: Black shirts for men and white shirts for women, pins, and hats according to age and gender were mandatory in the many parades and spectacles the regime organized and represented a visible, tangible and embodied translation of the attempt to fascistize the masses and discipline them.

Before delving into the specifics of the development and contribution of the textile industries during fascism, I would like to offer some reflections on the complex nature of

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fascist ideology and policies and how they found a concrete manifestation in fashion. The title of my chapter references the fascist project of defining a new "italianità" through the politics of nationalism and, on the other, through the project of expansionism and internationalization. In Mussolini's vision, fascism was to serve as a model for export, internationalization, and colonization. Fashion as a manufacturing industry and a powerful symbolic force was and still is an integral part of the dynamics between the local and the global. Under fascism, the fashion and textile industry built their own identity and developed multi-faceted strategies in the midst of political, economic, and cultural transformations. On the other hand, the creation of the ENM and the many policies it developed to promote and create a bourgeois modern and individualized fashion flew in the face of the process of uniforming the masses and fell into line with Italians' desire for new models of femininity and masculinity, consumption, and leisure and sports activities for both men and women. These moves towards modernity were accompanied and propelled by the development of retail shopping and department stores, the professionalization of advertising, and the exponential growth of magazines, whose consumers were mainly women who entered the work force. These modern aspirations were shared by many capitalist countries. The United States, for example, had been building its own garment industry and fashion that aimed to compete with Parisian hegemony. A similar process can be seen in the project embraced by the Duce of constructing a "national" style or an Italian fashion that could also compete with Paris.

Hollywood cinema and its success and popularity in Europe since the 1920s was a major vehicle to launch and glamorize an American style, and not only in dress. On the Italian side, Luigi Freddi played a crucial role in re-building the Italian film industry during the fascist regime. As undersecretary of the "*Fasci all'ester*o," he spent several periods in the United States and South America. After a period of study of the *modus operandi* of the Hollywood film industry, he authored a detailed report for Mussolini in 1934. Later, in his institutional role of under-secretary for cinema, he was instrumental in the opening of the Centro sperimentale di Cinematografia in 1935 and the inauguration of Cinecittà (the city of cinema) in 1937. Given the prominence the state gave to the production of Italian fiction films as well as to the Luce newsreels, and the economic backing it provided, cinema became one of the most powerful platforms to promote the Italian fashion industry and with it a more modern and glamorized Italian identity.[3] In several feature films, such as comedies of the "white telephone" genre, fashion houses in Italian cities received credits for the costumes, some of the first examples of product placement. In this way, similarly to the United States, fashion served two projects: A nationalist one and an international one that was part of a larger capitalist economy.

But what was there to export or for export? Fascism itself and/or Italian products? A brief review of a number of foreign policy statements from Mussolini's regime will help us here. In a speech by Dino Grandi, the undersecretary at the foreign ministry, we find this statement that lays out clearly one facet of fascist policy:

> Fascism is not—and Mussolini has said this repeatedly—an article for export, nor has it even claimed to be a universal idea or ideology: It is simply an Italian way of life, it expresses the synthesis of our historical experiences and our specific national needs and aspirations, it is exclusively Italian and it does not expect nor concern itself with other states seeking to imitate it, indeed as fascism is the typical and exclusive expression of the history and civilization of a specific people no imitation of it can or ever will be a faithful copy of fascism.[4]

This was but one view, which would soon be superceded, especially in the period of the *Decennale* (1932), which celebrated the first ten years of the fascist regime, the consolidation of its power and the prestige it enjoyed following the Lateran Pacts, establishing for the first time since unification peace between the Italian state and the universal church. Mussolini himself took charge of the foreign ministry and dispatched Grandi, the advocate of Italian exceptionalism, to London. Under the new policy, fascism was now conceived as "universal in spirit." Propaganda that emanated from societies and organizations such as the Dante Alighieri and the "*fasci all'estero*" was encouraged and supported to the point that fascism itself became an attractive article for export. A case in point was the Italian pavilion at the New York World Fair of 1939, an illustration of how fashion and Italian textiles were promoted abroad, that transmitted an image of a modern Italian way of life and an appealing and seductive Italian national identity.[5] Indeed, in the correspondence between Italian officials and the American offices of the Fair, Italy is presented as a modern nation that like all the Great Powers, had an *impero* following the conquest of Ethiopia and fascist expansion in the Horn of Africa. Fascism and fascist Italy's production and innovation in textile exploited the international platform to export a new *italianità*. The role of textiles was particularly important since Italy was to become a major exporter of Rayon, one of Italy's intelligent fibres.

The Intelligent Fibres: Between Innovation and Autarchy

The textile industry played a major role in the Italian economy during its phase of modernization in the years between 1920 and 1940. As in other capitalist nations, the achievements of the Italian economy were largely the result of the massive exploitation of low wage laborers, the majority of whom were women and children from rural areas, as dress historian Grazietta Butazzi has noted. The base of Italy's textile industry, then, did not differ much from that of the U.S. garment industry, which expanded considerably in these same decades on the back of the huge immigrant workforce, composed to a great extent by Italians, many of them seamstresses, embroiderers and tailors.[6]

Under fascism, the Italian textile industry took two directions, one traditional, promoting regional handicraft products like lace and embroidery; the other more innovative, giving attention to the development of the so-called new intelligent fibers like rayon. This latter, in fact, came to embody not only the very stuff of the modern image the regime sought to promote of itself, but also a tangible sign of the nation's economic self-sufficiency. The technological advances in production techniques that had given birth to rayon were presented as propaganda for the regime, a task that was assigned to the fashion and specialized magazines of the period, as emerges clearly from the extant ENM documentation on the intelligent fibers (Figure 11.1).

At the same time, however, in promoting these breakthroughs in technology as signs of modernity, the regime never neglected to emphasize its foundations in traditions and well-established practices. In the field of textiles, for example, a survey of the ENM documentation reveals how at an ideological level the mix of the new and the traditional was the battle cry of the regime's propaganda campaign.[7] I here use the term "propaganda" in the sense of "integration" and not in that of "agitation." According to the classification developed by Philip Cannistraro, these are the two modes of propaganda to which the regime had recourse at different times.[8] If propaganda by means of agitation had characterized the first revolutionary phase of fascism, between 1919 and 1922, and aimed at achieving short-term results, propaganda by means of integration was typical of

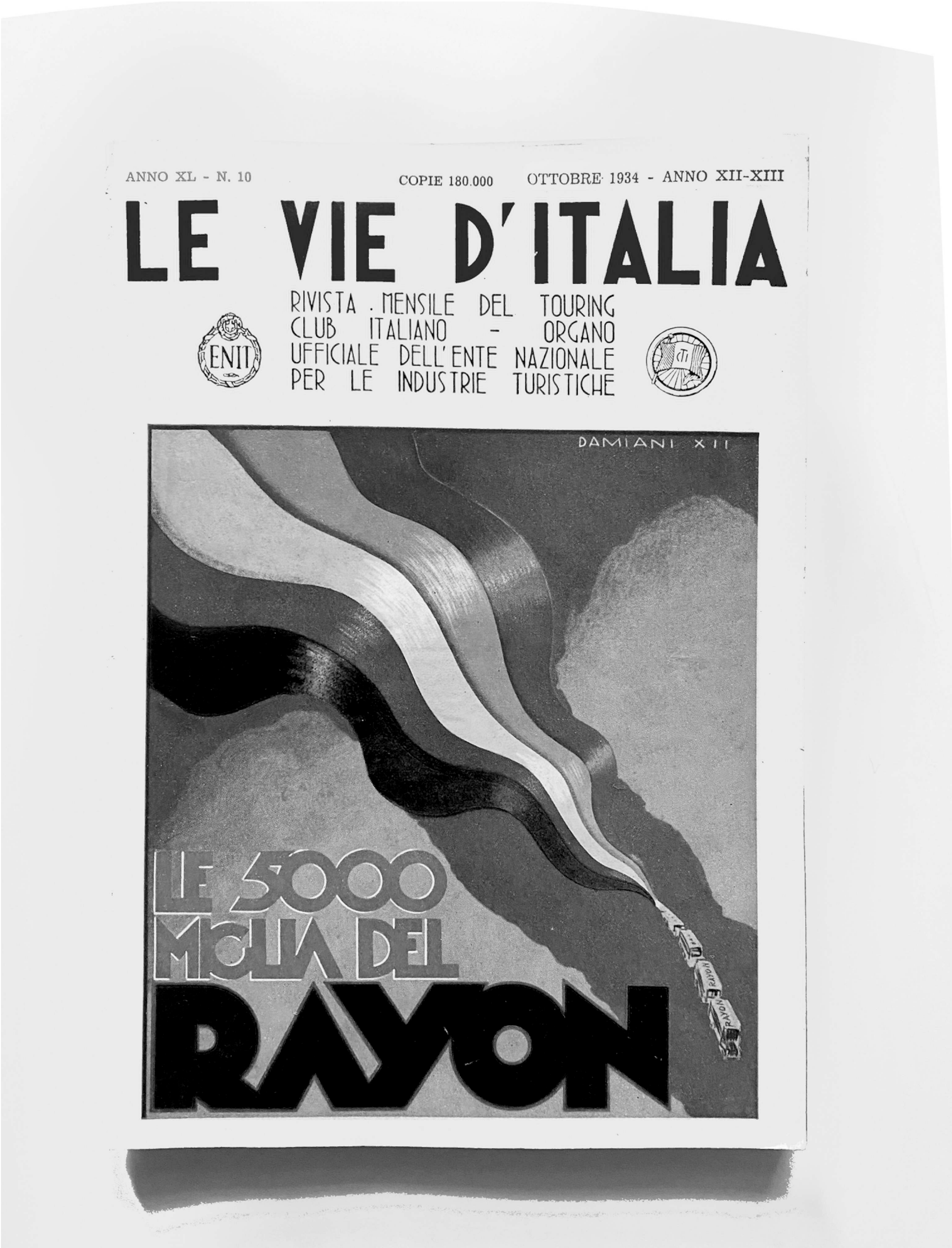

Figure 11.1 “Le 5,000 miglia del Rayon” cover of the magazine *Le Vie d’Italia*, October 1934, collection Dario Cimorelli.

the phase in which the regime consolidated its power. This latter type of propaganda sought long-term results and acted in a much more indirect manner. If agitation propaganda can be considered a kind of coercion, integration propaganda is a kind of more subtle non-coercive coercion. It was based, in fact, on commonplaces and myths—those of the virile man, and of woman as Mediterranean mother, a model of round-hipped beauty—that were already firmly in place and well-sedimented in Italian culture and daily practices. These myths and others like them, such as the dynamism of the northern cities and the inaccurate picture of southern culture, peasants and *massaie* working with textiles, etc., were presented with a veneer of modernity attached to them and came to represent models on which to base a sense of a fascist identity. For the construction of fascist popular culture, fashion, along with the press, cinema, and newsreels, took on an important role for the regime. One of the strongest propaganda slogans transmitted by the regime from the outset of the ENM in 1932 was that "the Italian woman must follow Italian fashion." Through some of the Istituto Luce newsreels, one of fascism's favorite media of persuasion and education, we can track this strand of policy, especially in the coverage the newsreels gave to the National Fashion Exhibitions. The first of these was held in Turin in 1933 and was inaugurated by Elena of Savoy, Queen of Italy. To the fore, in the coverage of this event, even before we see the actual shots of the inauguration, we read in very large letters that *La donna italiana deve seguire la moda italiana. Gusto, eleganza, originalità hanno dimostrato che la iniziativa può e deve avere successo* (The Italian woman must follow Italian fashion. Taste, elegance and originality have demonstrated that this initiative can and must be a success).[9] After this, we see a tracking shot of the art deco building where the exhibition is held and where the queen arrives welcomed by the *gerarchi*, all of them surrounded by a large crowd. Following these opening shots, we see a series of scenes that focus on single outfits worn by dummies displayed in shop windows. We, then, see real mannequins, surrounded by linear and modern furniture that complements their style of dress—suits, cocktail and evening gowns, and sports outfits. Parallel to this display of modernity, the camera goes on to give special emphasis to local traditions such as lace and a great variety of accessories. This was to be a recurrent trend at the subsequent semiannual exhibitions. Local craftsmanship would always be presented and exhibited alongside new models and textiles, underlining the fascist desire to combine tradition with modernity and to stress the economic importance of industry and craftsmanship.

Another Luce newsreel, this time from 1936, shown in the midst of the autarchic phase, covers the National Exhibition of Textile and Clothing in Turin.[10] Here, we first see a medium shot of the motto *Vestire italianamente* (Dress in an Italian manner), written on the building where the exhibition was housed, while in a tracking shot the camera dwells on the word RAYON written, like the slogan, in huge letters. Rayon was one of the regime's great successes and Italians were enjoined to produce and buy clothes made out of this home-produced intelligent fiber that acted as a sign of the nation's modernity. Rayon came to be identified with national identity and patriotism, as the juxtaposition of the opening of the 1936 newsreel makes clear.

With the Ethiopian War and the subsequent sanctions imposed on Italy by the League of Nations, Mussolini proclaimed the nation's economic autarchy and, in the field of fashion, the quest for home-produced fabrics became keener. For the textile industry and for individual designers and dressmakers this phase can be likened to a smithy of creativity. The nationalistic intent, which had been the prime mover behind the fascist policy to legislate the fashion industry, was now accompanied by the economic necessity to survive the crisis and avoid the danger of political isolation. The move towards autarchy was facilitated by the fact that on account of foreign sanctions, Italy had little alternative other than to withdraw into itself in order to survive. But if isolation had a price, it also had unexpected benefits. The imposition of sanctions, in fact, had the immediate effect of increasing the intensity of research and experimentation in textile and design. We can follow much of what was happening in the fashion industry at this time through specialist textile periodicals and other fashion magazines. These are testimony, certainly, to fascist propaganda, but at the same time, they furnish a great deal of information about the activities and the debate on the promotion of Italian fashion and industry.

But how exactly did the textile industry enact a process of modernization? This is no simple question for a nation like Italy that was not as industrialized as Great Britain or France, countries that since the nineteenth century could count on resources, especially textiles, from their colonies. Moreover, the British textile industry profited from a more stable and centralized government, whereas in Italy the deep north/south gap, as well as problems inherited from a very complex and relatively recent unification, still had a great bearing on industrial development, the textile industry in particular. Issues such as these were addressed in the study conducted in 1937 by Roberto Tremelloni, *L'industria tessile italiana* (The Italian textile industry) in which he pointed out that, despite all its structural problems, the Italian textile industry had achieved steady growth and surprising results.[11] Many companies had created experimental chemical and research laboratories in order to further their studies in new areas, above all in the creation of artificial fibers. Indeed, this branch of the industry, he went on, was at the head of a worldwide technological revolution in the production and consumption of fashion and style. Artificial fibers were playing an increasingly important role in manufacturing all over the world. The increase in world production of artificial fibers went from 600,000 kilograms in 1896 to 11,000,000 in 1913. By 1920, it had reached 25,000,000 kilograms, reaching 350,000,000 in 1934, and 890,200,000 kilograms in 1938.

In an article entitled "I tessuti artificiali" (Artificial textiles), published in the monthly review *Vita Tessile,* the author, a certain Lancellotti, referring to the aforementioned statistics, writes of the progress made by the textile industry and the impact it had had on both Italy and the world.[12] He begins, however, with a historical overview. The production of artificial fibers, he states, had begun with a series of unsuccessful experiments in the sixteenth century and continued, still with little success, throughout the following centuries. It was only in the nineteenth century that any real progress was made. Lancellotti goes out of his way to highlight the role played in this by the Italian textile industry, and the results it had subsequently achieved in the relatively short span of time since the end of World War I. In these 20 years, in fact, Italy had become the leading European producer of rayon and second in the world only to the USA.

After taking its initial steps from 1904 onwards, the Italian artificial fiber industry took off in 1919 when the SNIA, which had been founded in 1917 as an Italian American Shipping Company, was reconfigured as an Industrial and Commercial Shipping Company. Gradually the SNIA acquired control of a number of textile companies and by 1929 it had become one of the major groups in the world for the production of artificial fibers. Indeed, in the years following World War I, Italian production of artificial fibers increased consistently and in 1929 at its peak accounted for 16 percent of world production.

In the early 1930s, silk production, which in Italy was an important tradition going back to the Renaissance, and artificial fibers represented the two main profit-making entries in the national trade balance, the modern fiber and the traditional fabric each playing equally important roles. If the propaganda surrounding artificial fibers stressed its modernity, the propaganda surrounding silk underlined its time-honored qualities. *La seta,* the official publication of the *Federazione Nazionale Fascista degli industriali della seta* (National fascist organization of silk producers) published very detailed articles about the history of sericulture in Italian cities, their modes of organization and production. In "I primati degli antichi setaioli bolognesi" (The primacy of the ancient Bolognese silk workers), for example, Cesare Marchesini writes of the series of decrees that facilitated and boosted the production and quality of silk from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards.[13]

With the autarchic phase, however, a new problem arose that threatened to compromise self-sufficiency. Cellulose, an integral component for the production of fibers, was, in fact, largely imported, since conifers, from which the substance was extracted, were in short supply in Italy. To overcome this very real obstacle, imports of the product being all but impossible, researchers at the SNIA-Viscosa company arrived at a brilliant solution. They discovered that an annual plant called *canna gentile,* which grew naturally in some areas of Italy, could replace the kind of cellulose that was produced in the northern European forests. In 1936, the SNIA acquired a field near the small village of Torre di Zuino, later renamed by Mussolini as Torviscosa, located in the area between Venice and Trieste. Here the SNIA founded the *Società agricola industriale per la produzione Italiana di cellulose* (Industrial agricultural company for the Italian production of cellulose, SAIC).

Chemical experiments, which intensified in Italy in the autarchic phase, had meant that since the late nineteenth century artificial fibers and textiles similar to those produced in nature had been developed in both Europe and the USA.[14] It must be said, however, that the success of artificial fibers was above all a result of the drastic cultural changes that had taken and were taking place in Italy and elsewhere in the Western world. On account of the simplification of taste in styles, colors, and decoration, the amount of time it took to produce a garment dropped significantly, as did its cost. This conferred on synthetic fibers an extra attractiveness that still had the cachet of being modern. Without doubt, they represented a key element in the democratization of fashion and in its revolutionary charge in terms of large-scale production and consumption. Just as importantly, artificial fibers also meant that countries like Italy and their national industries were no longer dependent on variables like geography, weather or political vicissitudes as they had been for the production of garments using natural textiles such as cotton, linen, silk, and wool. Given these advantages, it is clear why the fascist regime acted quickly to control and promote to the full the textile, clothing and fashion industries. The interests and aims of the regime, however, were not only domestically oriented. The creation of a "national" style and taste also took the form of an important political and cultural battle that inevitably intertwined with the sense of identity the nation had of itself both at home and the perception of Italy from abroad. Under fascism, Italy still maintained strong economic and commercial ties with the USA and Europe, which were only lessened with the outbreak of World War II.[15]

Fascism had an eagle eye for how the rest of Europe and the USA regarded Italy and what the foreign response was to the steps taken by the regime in its domestic policy. Consequently, the regime was always quick to publicize any positive comments it received from its neighbors. In the world of fashion, for example, the regime seemed especially alert to the fact that components of fascist uniforms like the black shirt and the fez had become fashion items in France. In 1935, for example, *France Vogue* published an article on the *bonnet du fascio,* headgear that was very similar to the *fez* worn by members of the fascist militia. *Vogue* suggested wearing the fez with a deep green suit trimmed with astrakhan fur, leaving the jacket open in order to show off the black shirt.[16] This French readaptation of items drawn from fascist uniforms was a sign of the fascination exercised by the aesthetic side of fascism that then gripped, and still today occasionally grips, fashion designers. The report on the incorporation of a recognizably fascist iconography into the world of French fashion also underlined how successfully the regime had been in producing a strong international image of itself.

The regime also took a number of important public steps in the field of textiles. As a result of a national conference held in Forlì from December 11 to 13 1937 on National Textile Fibers, the regime decided to set up the *Ente Tessile Nazionale* (National textile body), to which it delegated the task of promoting and encouraging self-sufficiency—autarchy—in textile production. The main purpose of the *Ente Tessile Nazionale,* whose existence was ratified by a decree of April 1937, was to develop close collaborative ties to the several *Corporazioni dei prodotti tessili e dell'abbigliamento* (Corporations of textile products and clothing), to coordinate its policy for the production of fibers with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and establish strong links between the textile and the garment manufacture industry. In addition, but no less importantly, the *Ente Tessile*, like the ENM, had the function of publicizing the use and care of the new textiles.[17] The concern here was not only of a domestic patriotic nature, but was also and above all a concern not to lose contact with the international centers of fashion. Indeed, such contact was overtly stressed and the two industries, according to the regime, were to provide "the creative inventiveness of Italian taste in the style of dress for which truly Italian products were to be used.[18] It goes without saying that state backing of the textile and garment industries was, in the long run and especially in the period after World War II, to become beneficial to both. Legislation regulating fashion under fascism played a key role in the involvement of the State and its ad hoc institutions in the production of clothes. Nevertheless, despite the emphasis on autarchy and things Italian, fashion houses never completely ceased to look to Parisian fashion for inspiration, as the designer Fernanda Gattinoni, who used to work for *Casa Ventura* with branches in Rome and Milan, has recalled.[19] France remained a fixed reference point and Rina Pedrini, for example, one of the best-known pattern makers of the epoch retained an important role in the spread of French fashion in Italy. She, it is said, never missed a Parisian collection and over the years acquired at least 250 models that she reproduced and then sold to dressmakers.

All the same, the regime was tenacious in its legislation designed to encourage the production and consumption of clothes of domestic provenance. A Decree of June 26, 1936, for example, authorized the institution of a certificate of guarantee for clothing and accessories approved by the Ente. A year later, in 1937, a label called *Textorit* came into being as the equivalent certificate of guarantee for textiles. In 1938, the *Corporazione dell'abbigliamento* (Clothing corporation) amended the 1936 law to include sanctions against transgressors, and added another kind of certificate, this time known as the certificate of creation and given only to couture clothing that was particularly outstanding for its originality and *italianità*.[20] Subsequently, a decree of April 20, 1939, regulating the blending of imported fibers like cotton and wool, established that the maximum amount that could be blended with natural or non-autarchic fibers was 20%. Rayon, silk, hemp, national linen, ramia or *ramì* (china grass), produced in Piedmont and in Libya, broom and all other fibers except cotton were considered autarchic fibers and were to be used for blending in cotton manufacture, whereas for wool manufacture *lanital*, rayon, rayon-fiocco, ramia (china grass), broom as well as the rabbit and angora rabbit hair that gradually became used on a wide scale were designated as autarchic fibers.[21]

In 1936, the ENM commissioned journalist and author Cesare Meano to write a *Commentario dizionario della moda* (Commentary and Italian dictionary of fashion) in order to purge the Italian fashion lexicon of French terms, a volume of more than 400 pages.[22] Here we find several references to fabric and smart textiles. This is the case of *lanital,* which Meano defines as the most national of fibers and whose licence was acquired by the SNIA-Viscosa, was a synthetic textile obtained from milk casein and invented by an engineer named Ferretti.[23] *Lanital* was a domestic rival to imported wool and for this reason was greatly celebrated, alongside the technological achievements of the SNIA-Viscosa, in the Futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Poema non umano dei tecnicismi* (Non-human poem of technicisms). In the course of 1937, in fact, the production of *lanital* skyrocketed from 500 kilograms per day of the previous year to 7 million.[24]

The Forlì conference of 1937 was also the occasion for a huge exhibition of autarchic textiles and included a competition whose first prize went to a fabric made of a black *lanital* and viscose embroidered relief.[25] Along these lines, a great deal of effort went into the creation of alternative wools like *cisalfa,* a wool invented and put on the market by the Cisa-Viscosa company. Nationalist aims were also apparent in other fields of fashion. Parallel to experiments in technology, a plan was elaborated to promote the regional production of more traditional textiles. One of the products encouraged in this way was *orbace,* the rough and robust Sardinian wool that was widely used for fascist winter uniforms. An article published by *La Nazione* tells us, in fact:

> The Party Secretary, choosing *orbace* for the fascist winter uniform, has insisted that it be *orbace* made by Sardinian craftsmen [...] He has, therefore, gladly brought to our attention that the number of people working in this sector is 3,300, and of these about 1,500 work in the province of Nuoro where production has reached, as of today, 60% of that manufactured on the whole island.[26]

But in a context where tradition and innovation went hand in hand, rayon was considered the fabric *par excellence* of modernity, the "most modern of Italian textiles and the most Italian of modern textiles."[27] The rayon-fiocco, a short rayon fibre, first introduced in 1935 by SNIA-Viscosa, was a new and more versatile fabric that could be used in a much wider range of fabrics, creating new effects and brilliant colors. Often the judicious balance and mix of natural and artificial fibers offered advantages in the production of the fabric, sometimes even correcting or eliminating the disadvantages of natural fibers. In order to publicize rayon, the regime sponsored a rayon train, with shop windows like a department store, as well as a special truck equipped as a radio-cinema with mounted speakers broadcasting advertising tunes such as "Fili di sole" (Threads of the sun), a reference to the luminosity of the fabric.[28] As well as the image of modernity that it transmitted, there were also more banal economic reasons behind the promotion of rayon. It was seen by the regime, first and foremost, as a replacement for expensive silk on the home market so that more of the latter could be destined for export and thus boost the national coffers.

In the regime's view, the production of artificial fibers was to complement that of natural fibers in the development of new uses and designs for fashion, accessories, furnishings, etc. This is the case with hemp, which was declared a national autarchic fiber whose high levels of production were singled out for praise in several of the regime's publications. Hemp had never been used to any great extent for clothing, however, on account of its brittleness and unsuitability. Again pressed by the constraints of economic isolation, necessity being the mother of invention, efforts were made, mixing hemp and *fiocco* with other artificial fibers, to reduce the stiffness of the fabric and render it suitable for clothing. It had been, in fact, its toughness and durability that had made it ideal for luggage and accessories. Now that it had been rendered more versatile, the regime ordered an increase in the production of hemp and promoted a campaign aimed at hemp stockpiling. This, in fact, became law with a November 8, 1936, decree, supervised by the *Federcanapa,* the organization in charge of organizing and directing the new policy.[29] Indeed, hemp held a prominent position in the Italian pavilion at the World Exhibition of Textiles that was held in New York in 1939, where the *Federtessili* exhibited all the Italian textiles then in production, from silk to rayon, including the vast range of hemp and its combinations with artificial fibers such as the *canapafiocco*.[30] Already in the mid-1930s, this Italian fabric had become so successful that a *canapa balilla* appeared in the 1935 Parisian fashion shows[31] (Figure 11.2).

In a number of articles, the periodical *Fibre Tessili*, a publication whose ideological agenda was so close to the regime's heart that its pages are peppered with reiterations of the fascist slogan of "Impero, razza, autarchia" (empire, race, autarchy), emphasized the importance of the production of hemp. One of these featured a poster of pictures of several hemp stockpiles accompanied by an English text explaining the advantages of the increase in the quality of the fabric.[32] Moreover, what this poster aimed at showing was the interest Italy had in promoting a better trading relationship with the USA. In fact, the articles spell out the need to bolster this relationship on the occasion of the future World Exhibition, another projected feather in the cap of the fascist regime, that was supposed to be held in Rome in 1942, but which was cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II. As a further sign of official sanction, the activities and work of the Federcanapa, as documented in a photographic report that was sent to fascist party headquarters, are highly praised by Secretary Starace in a telegram he sent to the "Presidente Federazioni Consorzi Difesa Canapicoltura" (president of the Federation and Consortia for the Defence of Hemp Cultivation).[33]

Interestingly, it is not only the economic advantages of the production of hemp that are emphasized in specialist publications such as *Fibre Tessili.* One may be surprised, perhaps, at the seemingly inordinate amount of space that they give over to accounts of the workers' leisure time activities, organized by the local *Dopolavoro* associations, especially those of the workers in the key consortia in Bologna and Rovigo. [34] In several Italian cities and regions in which textiles were produced, the *Dopolavoro* often organized exhibitions in conjunction with the silk and hemp associations. An important part of these exhibitions was the awarding of prizes to those *massaie rurali* and *dopolavoristi* who had distinguished themselves in the workplace. This was little more than a trick, of course, used by the regime to induce workers to think of themselves as protagonists in a great project rather than as exploited members of a subaltern class.

In the field of textiles, attempts were also made to Italianize fashion. As well as the linguistic project of Italianizing the French terms commonly used, the process of disciplining the social body bore on the economic as well as the personal, extending its reach to all branches of culture, sport, leisure, and fashion. It is for these reasons that Riccardo Del Giudice, president of the *Confederazione fascista dei lavoratori e del*

Figure 11.2 *I Tessili nuovi* (The new textiles) cover of the magazine showing four different languages: German, French, English and Spanish, October 1934, Collezione Cimorelli.

commercio (Fascist Confederation of Workers and Commerce), writing in the article "Autarchia tessile. Contributo dei lavoratori del commercio" (Textile self-sufficiency. Contribution of trade workers), expressed the belief that all the steps taken by the regime in the field of fashion led to, in his view, the "work of national reeducation and propaganda of *italianità*."[35] The author gives a list of the most important steps undertaken by the institutions set up by the regime following the Forli' "Convegno delle fibre tessili nazionali e dell'impero" that had spawned a massive plan to achieve Italy's economic self-sufficiency. He states, in fact, that "we cannot explain to others, still less persuade them, if we do not have a culture suitable to our aim."[36]

Similarly, several local and national exhibitions, like the one held at the Circo Massimo in Rome, the *Mostra del tessile nazionale* (Exhibition of national textiles), one of the biggest, promoted the production of domestic textiles. Inaugurated on November 18, 1937, and kept open until January 31, 1938, the exhibition was organized by Starace and saw the participation of all the associations and institutions connected to the textile industries. In the numerous stands regional handicrafts and autarchic textiles like rayon and *lanital* were exhibited. On its own stand, SNIA-Viscosa, as well as showing the stages of production of *lanital,* also organized a fashion show on December 21. Along with "The week of artificial fibers" in January 1938, this was one of the major events of the exhibition. In a populist and folkloric manner, the exhibition also emphasized the work of the *massaie rurali*. Given great prominence by the *Giornale Luce* newsreels, one stand mixed the modern and the traditional by showing a group of women weaving the new artificial yarns on their old-fashioned looms. One newsreel, in particular, produced in the spring of the same year as the Rome exhibition, covers the National Exhibition of Clothing and Textile held in Turin, where the new fibers played a major role. Here, the viewer is immediately introduced to the SNIA pavilion where a group of young women dressed in floral print dresses weave autarchic yarns at their looms. To this, a shot of technicians wearing their white work uniform (such as that worn by medical doctors and scientists) is juxtaposed. The women are framed in the act of offering the visitors a sample of the yarns for them so they can feel the fiber, while at the same time answering any questions they might have.[37] Even without considering the obvious juxtaposition of the "old" looms of the women and the SNIA technology, this particular newsreel is interesting on account of the iconography of one of its advertisements. In fact, if we focus only on the representation of women, we find a confirmation of the fascist ploy of combining once again tradition--represented by the women who weave, which is a sort of archetypical image of woman-like Penelope—with women who are not wearing the folkloric dress typical of the *massaie rurali,* but light and modern dresses made out of the new fabric they are advertising, thus emphasizing their young and slender bodies. Nothing better than these images offers a more vivid illustration of the fascist ideology of incorporating tradition while at the same time striving for modernity.

One of the events at the Circo Massimo exhibition was a fashion show. Among its guests of honor were Dino Alfieri, the minister for popular culture, and the poet Marinetti who at the conclusion of the event read his "Poesia simultanea della moda italiana" (Simultaneous poem of Italian fashion), an aestheticized celebration of the "arbitrary whimsical and fantastic" character of fashion. As Cinzia Sartini Blum has noted, for Marinetti: "Anything goes, provided it is 'made in Italy' and is 'favorable to woman's feline softness'."[38] Futurist writers and artists had been involved in conceptualizing and redesigning male and female wardrobes. In 1920, Volt, the pseudonym of Vincenzo Fani, wrote the "Futurist Manifesto of Women's Fashion."[39] Here, the author establishes an equivalent relationship between fashion, women, and Futurism identified in: "Speed, novelty, courage of creation." Volt stresses the need to reconsider the grayness and conservatism of some current styles. Instead of considering them to be of "good taste," he labels them with a "lack of originality, a withering of fantasy." In the final paragraph of the manifesto, Volt underscores that the three-year war period had inevitably led to a lack of materials such as silk and leather. It is for these reasons that looking forward to the use of new and innovative materials, he proclaims:

> The reign of silk in the history of female fashion must come to an end just as the reign of marble is now finished in architectural constructions. One hundred new revolutionary materials are rioting in the square, demanding to be admitted into the making of womanly clothes. We fling open wide the doors of the fashion ateliers to paper, cardboard, glass, tinfoil, aluminum, ceramic, rubber, fish skin, burlap, oakum, hemp, gas, growing plants, and living animals. Every woman will be a walking synthesis of the universe.[40]

Apart from the overt exaggeration of this long list provided by Volt, some of the materials mentioned, such as cardboard, hemp, and growing plants, would later be used in the production of accessories and clothes in the autarchic period.

But if the Futurist concern with dress, here illustrated by Volt and Marinetti, was nothing new in the Italy of the 1930s, what was new was the nation's foray into colonial practices. These too were to have repercussions in the field of fashion. In this respect, an exhibition worth mentioning is the *IX Mostra-Mercato di Firenze* (Florence Trade Exhibition) held in the spring of 1939 and where attention is given to experiments in design and textiles that aimed at the creation of a new fashion for those Italians about to live in the newly acquired colonies of Ethiopia and Libya. To this end, a competition for "abbigliamento e arredamento coloniale" (colonial clothing and furnishings) was organized by the ENM in conjunction with the *Federazione Nazionale Fascista degli Artigiani e le Piccole Industrie* (National fascist federation of craftsmen and small companies). Acting as an indication of the cultural climate surrounding Italy's colonial experience, the coverage given to the exhibition by fashion magazines of the period, like the popular literature of the time, bore witness to the presence of a new imaginary landscape that mingled with existing visions of both fantastic geographical lands and true and proper models of male and female identity.[41] A specific analysis of this very important topic goes beyond the scope of the present study, but it certainly deserves much critical attention. However, suffice it to say that the bearing this had on the creation of the fashion discourse and on style was notable.

Prior to the fascist invasion of Ethiopia, liberal Italy under the government of Francesco Crispi had already started colonial expansion. Indeed, Africa, since the second half of the nineteenth century, as historian Angelo Del Boca has pointed out, had already entered Italian homes in the forms of popular newspapers and magazines such as *L'illustrazione italiana, L'esploratore, Il giornale popolare di viaggi* and others.[42] Fashion magazines such as *Lidel* and *Bellezza* contained a variety of articles and references to the colonies and their products. For instance, Mario Scaparro, author of *L'artigianato tripolino,* wrote an article for *Lidel* entitled "Tripolitania" in which he described the exotic landscapes epitomizing the "fascist work" of the colonizers who administered the foreign cities and territories, "civilizing" them under the western hand.[43] He goes on to describe two faces of Tripoli: The one, the "barbarian city," the other the "Italian city," where he explains that fascist officials sought to preserve its integrity especially as far as local and crafts products were concerned. Pictures of local Libyan craftsmanship illustrate the article—handbags, leather mules or "tarlik," with embroidery in parchment. These were all products that were becoming known then in Italy by way of exhibitions of "colonial art," so finding their way onto the European market. In the article, we also find detailed descriptions of ethnic female clothing, with a picture of a beautiful young woman encapsulating the mythic vision of exotic Arab beauty. Often, however, in this colonial context, the images of feminine models are accompanied by an age-old paternalistic stereotype, an orientalist perspective that sees "civilized" men offering "uncivilized" women the gift of culture, good manners, and progress. Parallel to this we can also note a Western fascination with and exoticization of an unknown culture—that of the colonies. The magazine, *Lidel*, for instance, is punctuated with a series of articles on "L'eterno femminino nero" (The eternal black feminine nature) and "La donna abbissina" (The Abyssinian woman), accompanied by pictures of very attractive black women and thus eroticizing the black body; or reports on *Mudundu,* a documentary shot in Somalia by newsreel journalists who worked for the *La Stampa* newspaper; or of another documentary called *Abissinia* that was edited by the *Istituto coloniale fascista* (Fascist Colonial Institute). In addition to this, advertisements for "exotic" products grew in number for perfumes with mysterious names such as *Egizia,* produced by the Ducale company in Parma—a city famous for fragrances—that aimed to reinforce the symbolic power of the fascist colonial expansion.[44]

Confirming this new trend towards the exotic during Italy's colonization of African territories, the journalist Coronedi, commenting on the aforementioned exhibition of female colonial clothing in the pages of *Fibre Tessili*, wrote:

> In the hall of the shiny glass central pavilion one can observe the exhibition of female colonial clothing. Bright white colors predominate, but are filtered by an intense range of tonalities of various nuances, from the warm earth of Siena to pale and fresh yellow straw. *Practicality and elegance, marked by harmonious Italian taste.* A true colonial wardrobe: A theory of particularly elegantly designed trousers made more attractive by the softness of their Meharist appearance [...] Tight sport jackets, hemp safari jackets, and here and there an ample shawl (*sciamma)* with a hood as a reminder of the local costumes. (emphasis mine)[45]

In this description of garments and accessories emphasis is given to a design that mixes "elegance and ease" and thus giving us an early version of what will become known as "Italian taste." In the exhibition, new materials were used creatively to develop new designs in clothing and accessories that mixed traditional Italian historical references with ethnic elements. Ferragamo and Gucci experimented with the use of new materials such as jute, linen, and bamboo for their accessories.[46]

By way of concluding this panoramic view of textiles, I would like to draw attention to the *Rassegna del tessile e dell'abbigliamento autarchico* (Review of textiles and autarchic clothing), organized in Venice in 1941 by the ENM in conjunction with the Textile and Clothing Industries and inaugurated on August 20th in the midst of World War II [47] (Figure 11.3).

In his article on the exhibition published in *Bellezza*, Lucio Ridenti noted that Venice, a city that had hosted important art exhibitions on painting, sculpture, theatre, and cinema, had never before welcomed "into its Olympus a goddess who has not yet been

Figure 11.3 Marcello Dudovich, *Rassegna* del *Tessile e dell'Abbigliamento autarchico* (Exhibition of textiles and autarchic clothing) Venice, 1941, 34,5 ×24 x 24,3 cm, Grafiche Fantoni & C, Treviso, Museo Nazionale Collezione Salce.

officially included among the Muses." Venice's debut as host city was made possible by the talent and inspiration of the architect, graphic artist, and illustrator Erberto Carboni, whose surrealistic installations gave an artistic twist to the event.[48] Indeed, the exhibition, held at the Palazzo Giustinian, one of the city's most beautiful buildings, overlooking the Grand Canal, was very innovative both in design and installation, as well as in the use of new materials. Carboni designed surrealistic dummies—made by the Rosa company in Milan—made of cellophane, straw, and crushed paper and newspaper pages. They were used to exhibit fabrics that were draped over the arms, hips, or shoulders of the dummies, or to show off the clothes and accessories produced by various fashion houses and Italian artisans. The subtext of the whole exhibition was to press the case for an official increase in the number of products. In fact, in the space of a year, the number of products approved by the *Ente tessile italiano* rose from 300 to 1,000.

A high point of the Venice exhibition was how the fabrics were spectacularly displayed in the long arms of a surrealistic sculpture on whose wrists drapes of fabric fell as if they were curtains from the ceiling. Here, Carboni enacts a clever reinterpretation and reuse of surrealist artists such as Salvador Dalì, Max Ernst, and Magritte, fashioning his fashion spectacle in the suggestive Venetian buildings and landscape. To complement the exhibition in the Palace galleries, more dummies were installed in the Loggia of Palazzo Giustinian overlooking the Chiesa della salute. They were arranged in such a way that they formed a group of three, evoking perhaps the three mythological Fates, that symbolized the entire exhibition thus reworking classical mythology and sculpture. They are indeed unusual and the reaction they produce is one of both a keen sense of modern design and of estrangement: Their faces, upper bodies, and arms are covered with straw, their arms or hips are draped with animal-like print fabric. From this one can also glimpse a hint of ethnicity, while at the same time perceiving a feeling of emptiness and silence. Their faces, especially, are emblematic of the absence of life their bodies exhibit. No attempt is made here to humanize their faces with the presence of recognizable features. The straw, in the illusory effect of the image, effaces their eyes and mouths, giving us the impression that they are almost shuttering off any possibility of speaking or seeing. In looking now at these pictures, one is struck by the juxtaposition of the metaphysics evoked by the dummies and the architecture of the city, while the emptiness of their gaze--miming that of statues--evokes an ambiguity and mystery similar to that of a De Chirico painting. Theirs is an unsettling presence, their covered faces hinting perhaps at their refusal to countenance the tragedy of the war then advancing towards them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have considered how textiles, their production, and their symbolic force were key vehicles for the creation of a national identity and of propaganda by the regime. At the same time, I wanted to highlight the high quality of their production, as well as the creativity and professionalism of those who worked in the industry. This was certainly a time of contradiction in a policy of fashion that looked both backward and forward. But it was perhaps the co-existence of phenomena of opposing natures, such as tradition and innovation, nationalism, and internationalism and the dual direction of fascist policy that made Italian fashion of the period so innovative, multifaceted, and rich. Dress and civil uniforms that were so integral to the fascistization of the masses coexisted with processes of desire and innovation and propelled the production of beautiful fabrics and fashion that led to the gradual transformation of an urban middle class. Ultimately, the combination and the mix of these diverse elements created the basis and the premises for what later will become one of the most desirable labels to be exported, Italian fashion and made in Italy.

Notes

1 Gianna Manzini, "La moda è una cosa seria" *La Donna* (July 1935): 37.
2 See Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism ruled Women*: *Italy 1922–43,* University of California Press, 1991; Adrian Lyttleton, "Introduction" in *Liberal and Fascist Italy 1900–45,* ed. Lyttleton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002; and Eugenia Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism: Beyond the Black Shirt*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2004.
3 Francesco Savio*, Ma l'amore no. Realismo, formalismo, propaganda e telefoni bianchi nel cinema italiano di regime (1930–1943),* Milan: Sonzogno, 1975; Savio, *Cinecittà Anni Trenta. Parlano i protagonisti del secondo cinema italiano 1930–1943,* 3 vols.Rome: Bulzoni, 1979;Gian Piero Brunetta, *Buio in sala: 100 anni di passione dello spettatore cinematografico,* Venice: Marsilio, 1989;James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex,* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986.
4 The quotation is contained in "Document 10" in John Whittam, *Fascist Italy,* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 157, and originally published in Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce,* Vol. 1, Turin: 1974, p. 372.
5 The role of Italy and the exhibition of Italian fashion and textiles at the NYWF will be included in the forthcoming new and expanded edition of my book *Fashion under Fascism. Beyond the Black Shirt,* to be published by Bloomsbury Academics.
6 On the topic of women and labor in fascist Italy in the engineering firm "Magneti Marelli," see Perry R. Wilson, *The Clockwork Factory: Women and Work in Fascist Italy,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
7 ENM, *La valorizzazione delle fibre tessili e la moda,* ENM, December 1936.
8 Phillip Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e Mass Media*, Rome--Bari: Laterza, 1975.
9 *Giornale sonoro,* n. 247, 1933, Rome Luce Archive.
10 *Giornale sonoro,* n. 458, 1936, Rome Luce Archive.
11 Roberto Tremelloni, *L'industria Tessile italiana come è sorta e come è oggi,* Turin: Einaudi, 1937.
12 E.R. Lancellotti, "I tessili artificiali," in *Vita Tessile* 7, 1939: 11–12.
13 Cesare G. Marchesini, "Il primato degli antichi setaioli bolognesi," *La Seta* 1: 2 (January/February): 15–16.
14 See Gian Giacomo Mingone, *Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo. Alle origini dell'egemonia americana in Italia,* Milan: Feltrinelli, 1980.
15 See Maura Garofoli, ed., *Le fibre intelligenti. Un secolo di storia e cinquant'anni di moda,* Milan: Electa, 1991.
16 Quoted in Natalia Aspesi, *Il Lusso e l'autarchia. Storia dell'eleganza italiana, 1930–1944,* Milan: Rizzoli, 1982, p. 41.
17 Decree n. 1057, April 28, 1937 and Law n. 80, January 27, 1938 in *Raccolta Ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno d'Italia,* Rome, 1937–38.
18 ENM, *La valorizzazione delle fibre tessili e la moda,* ENM, December 1936, p. 5.
19 Author's interview with Fernanda Gattinoni, Rome, June 2000. The edited interview is published in Paulicelli, *Italian Style. Fashion & Film from Early Cinema to the Digital Age,* London and New York: Bloomsbury Academics, 2016.
20 R.D.L. 26 June 1936, n. 1321, "Disciplina della produzione e riproduzione di modelli di vestiario e di accessori per l'abbigliamento." The decree became Law n. 666 on January 18, 1937.
21 R.D.L. April 20, 1939, "Il nuovo decreto sulle miscele tessili obbligatorie," published in *La seta* 4 (April 1939): 103–4. The periodical *Vita Tessile* published several articles that singled out fibers and described their qualities, uses, and the geographical areas more suitable for their cultivation. See, for instance, E. R. Lancellotti, "Le fibre autarchiche. Il Ramí," *Vita Tessile, 5* (May 1939): 13–16.

22 Cesare Meano, *Commentario – Dizionario italiano della moda,* Turin: ENM, 1936.
23 In his *Commentario,* Meano exalts the success of the Italian production of "intelligent fibers" in the 1930s. His entries on textiles are amongst the most patriotic and nationalistic in tone, but not paradoxically in their language. In this context, only the term internationally known as *rayon* is Italianized as *raion.* Ironically, almost all the names given to artificial fibers in Italy had exotic names, perhaps a marketing ploy aimed to attract more customers, especially abroad, with their modern flair and sound like *rami, Bemberg, rhodia, viscol, albene,* etc. Meano, however, domesticated and Italianized only the y of *rayon*, not *lanital*, the synthetic wool, a term that is a combination of the words *lana* (wool) and *Italia*, as it was invented in Italy in 1935. See Meano, 210–11 and 313–14.
24 Meano, *Commentario,* p. 106.
25 Natalia Aspesi, 1982, p. 77.
26 "Le uniformi in orbace," *La Nazione* in Oreste del Buono ed., *Eia Eia Eia, Alalà. La stampa italiana sotto il fascismo, 1919–1943,* Milan: Feltrinelli, p. 48.
27 "Le fibre tessili" in *Dea* (November 1937): 43.
28 Gnecchi Ruscone, A., "La moda" in *Anni Trenta. Arte e Cultura in Italia,* Milan: Mazzotta: 1982, p. 343.
29 *Fibre Tessili* 6 (1939): 286.
30 Interestingly, hemp is currently used by high fashion designers in order to project an eco-friendly and all natural look.
31 Quoted in Grazietta Butazzi, "Gli anni Trenta. La moda italiana si mette a confronto, tra autarchia e nuove prospettive," in *Moda femminile tra le due guerre,* Catalogue of the exhibition, Florence: Sillabe, 2000, p. 18.
32 "La Federtessili all'esposizione di New York," in *Fibre Tessili* 7 (July 1939).
33 The telegram by Starace is reproduced in *Fibre Tessili* 3 (March 1939): 91.
34 Loris Carrieri, "L'apporto economico e sociale dei magazzini d'ammasso," in *Fibre Tessili* 1 (January 1939): 4–7.
35 Riccardo Del Giudice, "Autarchia Tessile. Contributo dei lavoratori del commercio" in *Fibre Tessili,* 5 (1939): 4–7.
36 Del Giudice, p. 14.
37 Cinegiornale. C0033, Archivio Luce, Roma.
38 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Il poema non umano dei tecnicismi,* Milan: Mondadori, 1940. See Cinzia Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, especially the sections "Fashioning a Fascist Discourse" and "Pathetic Fallacy in the Technological Mythopoeia," pp. 140–5.
39 Volt (pseud. Vincenzo Fani), "Futurist Manifesto of Women's Fashion" in Mary Ann Caws ed., *Manifesto. A century of Isms,* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.
40 Volt, in Caws, p. 540.
41 For more on this see Pinkus, *Bodily Regimes. Advertising Under Fascism,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.
42 See Angelo Del Boca and Nicola Lablanca, *L'impero africano del fascismo nelle fotografie dell'Istituto Luce,* Rome: Editori Riuniti—Istituto Luce, 2002; see also Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Tripoli bel suol d'amore, 1860–1922,* Rome – Bari: Laterza, 1986 and Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa orientale,* 4 vls, Rome--Bari: Laterza 1976, Nicola Lablanca, *Storia dell'Italia coloniale,* Milan: Fenice, 2000.
43 Mario Scaparro, "Tripolitania," in *Lidel,* April, 1934.
44 See for instance, Giulietta Martini, "Eterno Femminino nero nei libri del nostro esploratore," *Lidel* (March 1935): 252–3; Ernesto Quadrone, "Mudundu. Il film italiano realizzato in Africa dalla spedizione cine-giornalistica de "La Stampa", *Lidel* (June 1935): 356–8 and Varo Varanini, "La donna abissina," *Lidel* (July 1935): 412–13.
45 P.H. Coronedi, "L'artigianato tessile italiano alla IX Mostra-Mercato di Firenze." *Fibre Tessili* 6 (June 1939): 287; the two terms "meharista" and "sciamma" that appear in this article have their origin in Italian colonialism, the first refers to the Arab soldiers who fought with colonial troops and the second refers to an ample shawl in soft white cotton which was used as the robe of Ethiopians. See Tullio De Mauro, *Grande Dizionario della lingua dell'uso* (Turin, UTET, 1999).
46 Gucci was founded by Guccio Gucci in Florence in 1921 and at first was a handicraft business.

47 Lucio Ridenti, "La rassegna del tessile e dell'abbigliamento autarchico," *Bellezza* (September, 1941): 39–41.
48 See Gloria Bianchino, ed., *Erberto Carboni: Dal Futurismo al Bauhaus,* Milan: Mazzotta, 1998.

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12 Fashion and Diplomacy

Vincent Dubé-Senécal and Madeleine Goubau

The relation between fashion and diplomacy is not new, as evidenced by the exchanging of fashion dolls between the French and Piemontese royal courts in the sixteenth century.[1] Moreover, as discussed by Elizabeth Block, unions of wealthy society women with public officials and ambassadors at the turn of the twentieth century "were perceived as constituting acts of soft diplomacy" because these women patronized French couture houses and thus promoted French business interests in their home country.[2] Most notably, Block explains this was the case of Frances Folsom, who, during her second term as the U.S. First Lady from 1893 to 1897, "patronized couturière Madame Lodaux and most likely the House of Doucet."[3] In fact, not only has it remained strong to this day, but it could be argued that fashion and diplomacy have become ever closer, especially since the advent of the Internet and social media. For example, one can think of many press reports of the dresses worn by the former American First Lady Michelle Obama at state dinners: By choosing foreign designers established in the United States, she often promoted domestic talents and industry while also giving a clever nod to the guest country.[4] The case of the inaugural Fashion Trust Arabia Prize, organized with great fanfare in Qatar in 2019, is also diplomatic in many ways. The contest, open to all young fashion designers from the Middle East and North Africa, appeared not only as a clear attempt by Qatar to distinguish itself culturally from other Muslim Gulf countries but also, above all, as a snub to the trade embargo imposed by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt at the time.[5] In Asia, the sustained efforts of the Indonesian state to claim the creation of batik—a traditional technique of dyeing cloth with wax—as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage of humanity also underlie issues of a diplomatic nature. Indeed, the origins of the technique are far from clear, and Malaysia also sought to claim its heritage as part of its own national identity.[6]

The diversity of these examples in terms of the nature of the initiatives, the type of objectives pursued, and the contrast between the regions of the globe they evoke, showcases the breadth of fashion's expression in diplomacy. It is precisely the multifaceted character of fashion's influence (cultural, economic, political) that makes it an especially strategic diplomatic tool, from a practical point of view,[7] and a particularly rich subject of study from an academic point of view. However, this conceptual perspective linking fashion and diplomacy does not resonate in the academic literature, where research combining the two appears only in a scattered, sporadic, and implied manner.

Two obstacles have likely contributed to this impression of a virtual absence of documentation on the subject. The first obstacle relates to the traditional division of academic fields and disciplines likely to be interested in the fashion-diplomacy dyad.

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These theoretical boundaries often act as blinders for researchers; the result is that knowledge relevant to this topic is built in various silos, each ignoring the others. Yet, drawing on a variety of approaches, or at least recognizing their contribution, is certainly useful to understand a subject as polysemic as fashion—a principle acknowledged by several authors in the field of fashion studies.[8]

The second obstacle is conceptual in nature and concerns both the notion of fashion and that of diplomacy. The use of the term "fashion" is accompanied by an ensemble of assumptions leading to its instinctive association with all things sartorial, upscale, feminine, and characterized by the incessant change in trends. From a historical perspective, haute couture is presented as the most significant institution of contemporary fashion—implying the domination of women's sartorial fashion over men's—because of the "great masculine renunciation."[9] This phenomenon expresses the shift in fashion that took place at the turn of the nineteenth century, with men's dress following a new, more austere style combining vests and pants with shades of gray.[10] On the one hand, this traditional conception of fashion precludes consideration of other, potentially significant aspects of fashion in diplomacy: Contemporary menswear, fast fashion, or even uniforms. On the other hand, it risks perpetuating some colonial or Eurocentric biases that tend to associate fashion, and therefore the notions of creativity, modernity, and renewal, exclusively with Western countries. What the rest of the world creates, produces, and wears is frequently called ethnic dress or folkloric costume, associated with the notions of resource-based economy, traditional production, and aesthetics frozen in time.[11]

The concept of diplomacy also has its share of vagueness. The variety of terms used over time to refer to the state's efforts to influence the opinion or actions of a foreign public—both in the practice and in the study of diplomacy—might prevent its accurate documentation and its recognition as a constant through time. Thus, what has been designated as propaganda, influence communication, cultural diplomacy, or cultural outreach, to mention only a few terms used, may appear to belong to phenomena that are unrelated. Yet the labels applied to those actions often depend on the prevailing nomenclature at the time they arose and on the school of thought to which those who documented them belonged to.[12]

This chapter, therefore, intends to suggest ways to firmly anchor the study of fashion's influence in diplomacy. In order to overcome the methodological obstacles inherent to a subject as multifaceted as fashion, we have adopted a transdisciplinary approach at the junction of the history of international relations, fashion studies, and public diplomacy. The exercise is broken down into two complementary approaches.

First, we suggest that it is necessary to acknowledge what has already been written about fashion and diplomacy, regardless of the terms used to refer to the dyad. A historiography of fashion's diplomatic influence thus makes it possible to account for the foundations that lead to, and still impact, its study. This is to avoid the mirage of a new body of knowledge supposedly free from any theoretical background, which would emerge spontaneously from the use of contemporary concepts to designate the phenomenon. Obviously, this overview involves colossal work that goes beyond the claims of this chapter. There are indeed bits and pieces of information on the diplomatic role of fashion—sometimes encountered fortuitously—in a host of books. The collection of those is modestly undertaken in this chapter from a historical perspective, considered essential to inform the present both in terms of practice and research. This will be followed by a short case study of France's instrumentalization of fashion's diplomatic influence from the 1950s to the 1970s, to illustrate the expression of such an influence with a key example.

Second, we propose a current and inclusive conceptual framework making it possible to bring together the work of researchers interested in notions of fashion and diplomacy, regardless of their theoretical perspectives. Although it is necessary to name things, the point here is not to put new labels on the phenomenon to create a new study silo. On the contrary, the idea is to reach broad principles rather than restrictive definitions, allowing the simultaneous extension and circumscription of what falls under the theme of fashion and diplomacy.

Fashion's Multifaceted Influence in International Relations

The study of fashion from a historical perspective was traditionally the preserve of cultural historians, until business historians added their contribution in the early 2000s by analyzing fashion production "through the interactions of commerce, culture and consumer."[13] Within this context, fashion histories—and that of related branches (perfume, beauty products, ready-to-wear, etc.)—grew exponentially in the last decade.[14] These studies stem from the new business history that merges cultural and business approaches by focusing "on relationships among enterprise, society, and culture"[15] while recognizing "that there is no such thing as a 'free market.'"[16] As a corollary to this acknowledgment of the global nature of the business, studies on the international politics of fashion emerged in the past ten years in parallel to studies on the political uses of clothing.[17] As such, it is only quite recently that fashion has started to be addressed through the political lens of international relations; the historiography stands mainly at the confluence of business history, cultural history, and the history of consumption.[18] Thus, cultural studies scholars and business historians have analyzed fashion's cultural influence and the business of fashion from a global perspective, taking into account its transnational nature as a sociocultural phenomenon. However, in so doing, they have neglected the fact that fashion was also created and disseminated as an element of international relations and that, as such, it had an influence specific to this stage: Diplomacy.

Furthermore, it is necessary to note the key importance of French fashion on the Western fashion system in contemporary historiography. Its authority most notably stems from what Gilles Lipovetsky designated as the "hundred years' fashion." That is, a period spanning from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1960s that saw a fashion system based on two cornerstones: Haute couture and *confection* (ready-made garments). While the former created original models, the second mass reproduced them, thus disseminating fashion chiefly through a top-down process.[19] In fact, as Carlo Marco Belfanti argues in his work on the advent of Italian fashion in the 1950s—and in chapter 24 of this book—the preeminence of French fashion's influence was both historically grounded and a construct of Parisian haute couture that had "portrayed itself as the natural heir to the primacy in fashion held by seventeenth-century France."[20]

Conversely, the pervasiveness of French fashion's influence did not preclude studies of the role played by other Western fashion centers as well as that of non-Western civilizations, albeit not from a diplomatic perspective. In his work on the cultural history of fashion, Belfanti examined the sociocultural influence of fashion in the three great Asian civilizations of India, China, and Japan, which took place independently of the Western fashion system. The only distinction between the Asian and Western systems was the scale of the phenomenon, with the influence of fashion extending to a larger part of Western societies compared with that of Asian societies. This was mainly due to "the increasing availability of items of clothing and 'trendy' accessories of contained cost, for example *populuxe* goods," that is, affordable goods with a veneer of luxury.[21] This perspective was revisited recently by Penelope Francks, regarding Japan specifically, as part of a wider literature on the sociocultural and business influences of non-Western fashion.[22] In her work on the kimono and the economic development of Japan, Francks revealed that what had been considered luxury fashions with limited influence in society became, in fact, a mass-market force before the globalization of the Western fashion system.[23] In addition to testifying to the very real influence of non-Western fashion, these studies showcase the importance of cultural and business perspectives in the study of fashion's influence. Furthermore, they show that it goes even beyond that of French fashion, whose influence, while preponderant both historically and in academia, was obviously not all-encompassing. This is compounded by the historiography on Western fashions that, while acknowledging the influence of French fashion on the Western fashion system, still recognizes the polymorphism and polycentrism of fashion's influence following World War II—that is, the steady rise in prominence of other Western fashion centers (Florence, Rome, Milan, London, New York) that paralleled the overlapping decline of haute couture and growth of ready-to-wear in the second half of the twentieth century.[24]

This short historiography highlights the fact that the histories of fashion and of its influence have encompassed both the sociocultural aspect of fashion's immaterial nature (ideas, brands, designs, images) and the socioeconomic aspect of the fashion business (manufacturers, department stores, couture houses, trend forecasters, fashion magazines). This was initially done from the perspective of Western fashion systems, with non-Western perspectives added only recently. Insofar as these studies have touched upon the international influence of fashion, they have done so either anecdotally to illustrate a change of historical context or to testify to fashion's importance from the perspective of consumers or producers. However, we argue that by examining—even indirectly—this international influence, these studies reveal a multifaceted influence of fashion that is of interest to diplomacy. While researchers in the last decade have tried to put their finger on this reality, they have usually focused on the use of clothing to convey political messages and not on fashion's diplomatic influence on the international scene in a sense that could be compared to other forms of influence used by states, such as cultural events, commercial events, and scientific cooperation. Since in this chapter we seek to define the diplomatic influence of fashion as something that is, in itself, both of interest to states as well as possible to study from an academic perspective, it is useful to draw on a historical example. To do so, we singled out the case of postwar France for two main reasons.

First, we argue that the case of France is paradigmatic because of its scope. Indeed, while acknowledging that French fashion was not unique in its global influence among Western and non-Western fashion systems, we recognize that it nonetheless had a preeminent influence on global women's fashion and that, as such, it had the potential to interest French diplomatic agents. Just as Véronique Pouillard focuses in her book on the transatlantic fashion industry on "the relation between Paris and New York as paradigmatic, but not unique"—because, among other things, "firms based in Paris set the tone for a global fashion culture, especially in terms of women's fashion"—we focus on the case of France as being paradigmatic, but not unique, for studying fashion's diplomatic influence.[25]

Second, the French government directly subsidized promotional actions with a diplomatic undertone starting in the 1950s. While government encouragement to participate in international expositions goes back at least to the second half of the nineteenth century in France, as is discussed by Elizabeth Block in her 2021 book *Dressing Up*, this indirect encouragement shifts to a full-blown subsidy scheme after World War II.[26] As such, France implemented two postwar aid-to-couture plans between 1952 and 1981 that are the origins of the creation in 1984 of DEFI, a trade committee dedicated to the development and promotion of French textiles and apparel, which remains active today.[27] France's first aid-to-couture plan—that started in 1952 as a subsidy to encourage the use of French fabrics in haute couture collections—progressively turned toward promotional actions abroad, with the percentage of subsidies allocated to such actions almost tripling from 12.5 percent in 1952 to 36.2 percent in 1960.[28] At the time, the promotional actions involved participation in fairs and events abroad. Such activities continued to be subsidized in the 1960s. Following the end of the initial aid-to-couture plan in 1960, the remainder of the plan's funding was allotted in 1961, effectively subsidizing promotional actions until 1967.[29] A new plan then emerged in 1968 that was dedicated solely to subsidizing promotional actions by members of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne (CSCP), the trade association for Parisian couturiers.[30] This new plan added a layer to the initially subsidized activities by also directing funds to the production of promotional movies that were disseminated worldwide by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[31]

The Diplomatic Relevance of Fashion's Influence: The Case of Postwar France

In this section, we look at the case of postwar France, whose paradigmatic nature contrasts with other national cases of state intervention in favor of fashion industries. We start by briefly discussing the Italian case, in which the links between fashion and the state are obvious but their diplomatic significance is less clear.[32] There are two key differences between the French and the Italian cases. First, in Italy, there was no direct involvement of diplomatic agents. This difference stems from the centralization of France's postwar subsidies to its fashion industry, through the aid-to-couture plans, combined with the centralization of the couturiers' representation within the CSCP. Second, while in France the only major fashion center was Paris, there were multiple fashion centers competing for notoriety in Italy.

As discussed by Valeria Pinchera and Diego Rinallo in their study of the emergence of Italy as a fashion country after World War II, by the turn of the 1950s, Italy harbored four fashion centers. These were Turin's Ente Italiano Moda (EIM), Milan's Centro Italiano Moda (CIM), Rome's Comitato della Moda (CM), and Florence's Italian fashion shows, set up by Giovanni Battista Giorgini, which debuted on February 12, 1951.[33] This decentralization made it more difficult for Italian fashion to foster national branding; the decentralized model of events pitted numerous Italian cities and regions against one another, unlike French fashion, which exclusively centered on Paris. In short, as Pinchera and Rinallo explain regarding this distinction between the Italian and French models, "The scale of place branding initiatives is not necessarily the nation. In this sense, French couturiers were an ideal, but not necessarily typical situation."[34]

This early postwar distinction between the French and Italian fashion systems is compounded by the specific postwar French diplomatic context. Starting in 1947, France agreed to be part of the U.S.-led Marshall Plan aid scheme, which, in France, was paralleled by the Plan Monnet that directly linked the achievement of its objectives to the American credits of the Marshall Plan.[35] This set in motion the reconstruction of the country's economic structure through a mixed economy based on five-year plans, which continued up until the 1990s.[36] This planning context had an undeniable influence on the status of French fashion. This was reflected in the 1948 Plan Council's report on the modernization of the textile industry stating that the "specialty fabrics" (*haute nouveauté*) used in French haute couture creations had to promote French fabrics in foreign markets, thus integrating fashion into France's commercial diplomacy.[37]

As noted by historian Laurence Badel, France's postwar commercial diplomacy explored strategies to export not only goods or services but also what were deemed "universalizable values" through international fairs and technical exhibitions. In turn, Badel explained, this inaugurated "a prestigious commercial diplomacy that participated in the affirmation of the regained *grandeur*" of France.[38] It is within this context that the state-sponsored promotional actions of haute couture in foreign markets between 1952 and 1981 mobilized the prestige of French fashion as a tool for commercial diplomacy and for national prestige.

An early example of French diplomats' interest in the influence of fashion as part of haute couture promotional events abroad appears in a series of eight letters from French ambassadors, commercial counselors, and consuls dated between February and April 1955 and collected by Christian Dior Export. These letters had been written in response to a promotional tour organized by the House of Dior that had taken place between September and November 1954 in 17 cities across 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.[39] The goal of Dior with this tour was to participate in galas and prestige events organized in the presence of foreign dignitaries (usually the wife of the host country's president), the national press, and French diplomatic agents abroad. This strategy, adopted by Dior in 1954, followed an exchange of views between Jacques Rouët, the company's executive officer, and the members of the aid-to-couture commission in a meeting held on January 29, 1953. On this occasion, Rouët informed the members of the commission that following his trip to South America in June 1952, he had realized that made-to-measure clothing no longer existed in these countries, having been replaced by American ready-to-wear. For this reason, he encouraged the organization of prestigious promotional events in order to attract the interest of authorities in the targeted countries.[40] In turn, the French diplomatic interest in such promotional events can be summarized by the example of Lionel Vasse, the French ambassador in Panama, who acknowledged it in the following terms:

> I consider that an event of the kind of yours contributes to making known to Panamanians that France remains the country of elegance and good taste and that its couturiers are at the forefront of women's fashion. At a time when we tend too much to minimize real values in favor of ephemeral achievements, we must remind abroad that France still has great permanent values such as "Haute Couture" that you have, so fortunately, portrayed here.[41]

This assessment of the French ambassador in 1955 is fundamental for two reasons. First, by referring to the importance of disseminating French values through haute couture and women's fashion, it directly ties into what Badel defined as postwar French prestige-based commercial diplomacy: That is, a practice seeking to mobilize and to communicate French ideas and culture in support of, as well as in addition to, French commercial events abroad. Second, it highlights the emergence of what would become the core expectation of French diplomatic agents regarding haute couture and French fashion from then on.

Starting in 1957, subsidized couturiers became a fixture in promotional events abroad. These events mostly took place as part of either French Weeks or three-week-long French Fortnights that combined cultural events (e.g., the showing of French movies or French plays) with the selling of French products by the host city's department stores and boutiques. In fact, this approach to promotional events through haute couture at the junction of prestige and commerce was codified in a memorandum from François Gavoty, the French commercial counselor in the United States, on December 6, 1960. This document explained that haute couture was to be one of the highlights ("*un des 'clous'*") of the French Fortnights in order to ensure wide media coverage.[42]

Following the end of the first aid-to-couture plan in 1960, the government kept funding couture's promotional events by dedicating the remainder of the unused funds to such actions from 1961 to 1967. Between these years, the subsidized haute couture actions included participation in events as varied as a prestige gala for the benefit of cancer research in Chicago in 1962 or a show in Montréal during the 1967 Universal Exposition.[43] In fact, with the advent of the haute couture movie subsidies during the second aid-to-couture plan, French diplomatic interest only grew. These 26-minute movies displaying haute couture collections and disseminated globally by the French embassies offered new opportunities. As explained in Vincent Dubé-Senécal's work on the 1967–81 aid-to-couture plan, this was made clear at the turn of 1976 through letters dated October 1975 to January 1976 from 12 French ambassadors and consuls that argued for the need to obtain more copies of these promotional movies.[44] These letters testified to the great interest shown by television broadcasters with Jean Louis Mandereau, the French ambassador to Bolivia, confirming it "was an efficient means of cultural action."[45]

By the end of the second aid-to-couture plan in 1981, fashion's diplomatic influence was clearly defined as part of France's postwar prestige-based commercial diplomacy. This attests to the historical relevance of the study of fashion and diplomacy through the tangible interest of diplomatic agents in its influence. However, as stated in the introduction, we believe that to fully take into account its multifaceted character, the fashion-diplomacy dyad would be best served by a diversity of academic perspectives—and by research beyond the case of France, which serves only as a revealing example of the phenomenon.

Operationalizing Fashion as an Instrument of Diplomatic Influence

In the previous sections, we have demonstrated that fashion was mobilized as part of the diplomacy of states and that foundations for its study from the perspectives of business, culture, and politics already exist. As such, we now have to reframe the subject on a conceptual level. First, we propose to draw inspiration from the field of fashion studies to extend the scope of the concept of fashion to everything that has to do with fashion. Second, we circumscribe the concept of diplomacy by borrowing from that of public diplomacy, which puts the relationship between the state and foreign audiences at the heart of its definition.

Fashion as Everything That Has to Do with Fashion

In contrast to much academic terminology, the term "fashion" is used so widely in our daily life that it seems to need no definition. We do not mind hearing related terms—such as "dress," "style," or "clothing"—being substituted for it.[46] This recklessness, however, often transposes itself into the work of researchers from different disciplines for whom fashion is only a passing interest. They candidly use these terms interchangeably or opt for one of them without necessarily justifying their choice.[47] The field of fashion studies, however, appears to be very useful for defining in an inclusive manner what can be considered to relate to the presence of fashion in diplomacy. Fashion studies is a particularly multidisciplinary field that has, as its name suggests, fashion as a central object. The informal origins of fashion studies are distant in the sense that even the writings of Plato can be evoked to demonstrate that matters of dress and appearance have always contributed to reflections on society.[48] However, its formalization only dates back to the 1990s. Authors who claim an affinity to fashion studies draw on a common core of references on fashion both classical (such as the writings of Georg Simmel[49] and Thorstein Veblen[50]) and recent (such as those of Valerie Steele[51] and Jennifer Craik[52]) and enrich it with theories from their own discipline. In a chapter titled "Fashion Studies Takes on Politics," Hazel Clark and Molly Rottman summarize well the wide spectrum encompassed by fashion studies:

> Fashion Studies examines the nature and condition of fashion in the contemporary moment, as well as historically and cross-culturally. The field examines fashion as an embodied practice, with its related industry, production, consumption and performativity. To quote from the graduate program with which we as the authors are most closely associated, fashion studies enable the exploration of "fashion as object, image, text, practice, theory, and concept and develops a critical understanding of fashion and its complex global intersections with identities, histories, and cultures in the contemporary world."[53]

If fashion studies researchers generally share the concern of defining what fashion is, the fact remains that their respective definitions are often tinged with their own research interests. As fashion sociologist Diana Crane noted, they present fashion variously as a form of material culture related to body adornment and decoration, as a language mobilizing clothing as a message, as an industry combining creation, production, and marketing or as a social phenomenon driven by a simultaneous desire of belonging and of differentiation.[54] In addition to cohabiting, these multiple definitions are also the subject of critical work, particularly with regard to the colonial and Eurocentric biases we discussed earlier.

To take a position by choosing one or the other of these definitions runs the risk of excluding certain aspects of fashion that have potential value for the study of its influence in diplomacy, which would be contrary to the objectives pursued in this chapter. However, arriving at a consensus on how to define fashion is a task that this text does not aim to achieve. Thus, to grasp the full potential of the role of fashion in diplomacy, we suggest instead to simply consider it as broadly and inclusively as fashion studies does as a field, that is to say, as *everything that has to do with fashion*. A brief parallel with sport may be useful here to understand what we mean, since it is readily accepted that sport functions as a tool for diplomacy.[55] The way in which academia documents sport as a tool for public diplomacy reveals the breadth and complexity of the subject. It includes both the performance of the athletes and the number of medals won, as well as the prestige attached to the organization of the sporting event or the impact of boycotting a competition, among other things. In other words, it is *everything that has to do with sports*. By mobilizing the extent of the understanding of the subject of fashion within the field of fashion studies, one arrives at a rich and multidimensional conception of the object of fashion in the context of diplomacy. It is then up to researchers to clearly state the facets in which they are interested as well as the perspective from which they approach the topic, but all angles can be considered useful for the legitimate conception of the theme of fashion in diplomacy.

Public Diplomacy: The State and Its Foreign Audience

To frame the notion of influence orchestrated by the state and directed toward the public abroad, we turn to public diplomacy. This is a domain of government practice, an academic field, and the key concept at the heart of the field. Once again, the point here is not to use this concept to create new blinders, but rather to mobilize its underlying components and concerns, and use them as rallying points.

As explained by Jan Melissen, one of the key authors interested in the epistemology of public diplomacy, comparing public diplomacy to traditional diplomacy quickly captures the essence of what defines each. Traditional diplomacy is the peaceful management of the international environment in the form of negotiations between official actors working for national governments, hence from diplomat to diplomat. Public diplomacy is mainly distinguishable from traditional diplomacy by its audience: The public.[56]

It is quite widely considered that the term "public diplomacy" was coined in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, an American diplomat who later became dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. According to Nicholas J. Cull, one of the most prolific authors in public diplomacy,[57] the term was immediately adopted by the U.S. government as it needed a "benign alternative to terms like propaganda and psychological warfare to allow a clearer distinction between its own democratic information practices and the policies pursued by the Soviet Union."[58] Public diplomacy, named as such, was therefore practiced by states before academic researchers documented it. It has even become a buzzword[59] for politicians and diplomats with the popularization in the early 2000s of the concept of soft power.[60]

The importance of public diplomacy has led to its institutionalization in academia. Public diplomacy as a field of study is particularly multidisciplinary.[61] Like fashion studies, it is defined above all by its main object of study—namely, the concept of public diplomacy—and by a set of concerns shared by the community that studies it from a multitude of approaches. The result is a fragmented research horizon. In her book, *The Future of US Public Diplomacy: An Uncertain Faith*, Kathy Fitzpatrick identified and analyzed more than 150 definitions, from which she drew six different perspectives underlying public diplomacy's primary functions: Advocacy/influence, communication/informational, relational, promotional, warfare/propaganda, and political.[62] While these angles may prove useful in accounting for the different facets of public diplomacy, the community of researchers belonging to this field still debate some common major issues, including the *sine qua non* involvement of the state in considering whether an initiative falls under the scope of public diplomacy. In other words, some researchers believe that in our era, when government entities must contend with more and more new actors on the international stage—companies, NGOs, transnational groups, and even individuals rising in power on a global scale—the concept of public diplomacy should include initiatives carried out independently by these non-state actors.[63]

Although we propose to acknowledge the contribution of non-state actors in public diplomacy—how could it be otherwise from the moment fashion is mobilized as an instrument of influence?—we also think it is important to maintain the role of the state as an essential element in the definition of public diplomacy in the study of the fashion-diplomacy dyad. Of course, the way a celebrity, or even a foreign tourist, is dressed might influence how people abroad perceive his or her home country. However, appending the concept of "diplomacy" to such examples dilutes its meaning and appears counterproductive to our exercise of circumscribing an area of research.[64] Thus, we propose the following definition of public diplomacy: The efforts of a state to communicate with foreign audiences in order to influence their perceptions and/or actions and ultimately serve its own interests.[65] It should be noted that the notion of communication here takes on a very broad meaning according to which all behaviors and actions have the value of a message.[66]

It is above all the elements of this definition taken for what they evoke, and not the expression "public diplomacy" as such, that should serve as rallying points for researchers interested in the fashion-diplomacy dyad. As mentioned earlier, whether they do so using the vocabulary of their discipline or that encountered in the archival corpus they consult does not fundamentally matter as long as the basic ideas behind the research interests are the same. These could be summarized in two points: The involvement of the state in the initiative, and the intentional targeting of foreign audiences.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, we outlined the study of fashion and diplomacy; that is, the expression of the diplomatic influence of fashion in international relations, the nature of its various manifestations and that of its observation by both historical actors and scholars. In order to do so, we did not seek to criticize the current historiography but to build on its wide-reaching studies of fashion and its global and international influence. As such, while acknowledging that the diplomatic influence of fashion had yet to be analyzed, the historiography of fashion's influence revealed both its multifaceted and international natures. In turn, these serve as a starting point to define the diplomatic influence of fashion.

This led us to exemplify the expression of the diplomatic influence of fashion through the case study of the French postwar aid-to-couture plans while contextualizing it by looking at the Italian postwar fashion rebirth that took place concurrently. This helped us historicize the diplomatic influence of fashion by testifying to the tangible interest in fashion's influence as expressed in archival records by French diplomatic agents. Additionally, by looking at the ties between haute couture, fashion, and the French postwar prestige-based commercial diplomacy, we showcased the multifaceted influence of fashion at the confluence between national prestige and commerce. Consequently, this contributes to an opening of the research field of fashion and diplomacy to a wider range of states; France is not a unique case. That is why we argue that the operationalization of fashion's influence as an instrument of diplomacy be grounded not on single national examples but on a conceptual construct mobilizing the theoretical tools of both fashion studies and public diplomacy.

Framed as suggested, the project promises to be rich and diverse. The theme of fashion in diplomacy can be studied from a host of complementary disciplinary perspectives and is embodied in a multitude of historical and contemporary cases—anecdotal or systemic—all over the world. As we have shown in this chapter, this was obvious in France's postwar desire to mobilize the aura of prestige and creativity of haute couture for political, cultural, and commercial purposes with different audiences internationally. Still, we argue that the fashion-diplomacy dyad is also to be explored in other, more contemporary examples such as the attention paid by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2017 to the patterns on his socks, which featured rainbow colors and the words "Eid Mubarak." While distinctly different than the case of postwar France, Trudeau's mobilization of fashion serves to illustrate the scope of fashion's influence, which at the time killed two birds with one stone during a gay pride parade that coincided with the end of Ramadan. Indeed, this episode is nothing superficial in light of the Trudeau government's foreign policy priorities, focusing on the promotion of the image of a country made prosperous thanks to its multiculturalism and acceptance of all kinds of diversities.[67]

Ultimately, what this example shares with the cases of France and Italy pertains to the main goal we set out to reach with this chapter: To integrate the historiographical inputs on the international influence of fashion into the diplomatic perspective of international relations in order to define fashion as a vector of influence that can be mobilized as part of diplomacy. In so doing, we propose an approach that integrates fashion's multifaceted influence in order to come to grips with the fashion-diplomacy dyad as a whole instead of looking at each component individually, either through the study of the political use of clothing or that of the business of fashion.

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Notes

1 Thierry Maillet, "Histoires de la médiation," 414.
2 Block, *Dressing Up*, 113.
3 Ibid., 110.
4 Friedman, "What Michelle Obama Wore and Why It Mattered."
5 Paton, "Why Soft Power Is in Style in Qatar."
6 Gelling, "Score One for Indonesia in the War Over Batik."
7 Dubé-Senécal, *La mode française*, 270–1.
8 For examples of multidisciplinary works that can be located in the fold of fashion studies see, among others: González and Bovone, eds., *Identities through Fashion*; Damhorst, Miller-Spillman and Michelman, *The Meanings of Dress*; Haye and Wilson, *Defining Dress*.
9 For the significance of haute couture, see: Lipovetsky, *L'empire de l'éphémère*, 82, 108; For the quotation, see: Steele, *Fifty Years of Fashion*, 2–3.
10 Roche, *La culture des apparences*, 62.
11 For a critical approach to what underlies the concept of fashion see, among others: Craik and Jansen, "Constructing National Fashion Identities," 3–8; Jansen and Craik, "Introduction," 1–22.
12 Bruce Gregory makes a comprehensive inventory of the many theories and currents of thought that have influenced the emergence of public diplomacy as a practice and a field of study, starting from the 1920s. Gregory, "Public Diplomacy," 274–90.
13 Blaszczyk, "Rethinking Fashion," 1.
14 Blaszczyk and Pouillard, eds., *European Fashion*; Donzé and Fujioka, eds., *Global Luxury*; Jones, *Beauty Imagined*.
15 Blaszczyk and Wubs, "Beyond the Crystal Ball," 5.
16 Blaszczyk and Pouillard, "Fashion as Enterprise," 9.

17 Burger-Roussennac and Pastorello, “Se vêtir de/en politique,” 11–17; Lemire, ed., *Force of Fashion*; Behnke, ed., *International Politics of Fashion*; Bartlett, ed., *Fashion and Politics*.
18 For more details on this historiography, see: Dubé-Senécal, “La mode française,” 8–19; Bass-Krueger and Kurkdjian, “State of Fashion Studies in France,” 228–9.
19 Lipovetsky, *L'empire de l'éphémère*, 80–1.
20 Belfanti, “Renaissance and ‘Made in Italy’,” 64.
21 Belfanti, “Was Fashion a European Invention?,” 442–3; Belfanti, *Histoire culturelle de la mode*, 215–16. For the definition of “populuxe goods” see, among others: Cissie Fairchilds, “Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods,” 228–48; Maxine Berg, “New Commodities, Luxuries and Their Consumers,” 63–86.
22 See note 6 where the author refers to the works of Antonia Finnane on China (*Changing Clothes in China*, 2018) and Michele Maskiell on India and Pakistan (“Honour, Desire, and Fashion,” 224–45): Francks, “Was Fashion a European Invention?,” 333, 355.
23 Francks, “Was Fashion a European Invention?,” 354.
24 Belfanti, *Histoire culturelle de la mode*, 12; For the influence of other Western fashion centers see, among others: Steele, “Italian Fashion and America,” 496–505; White, *Reconstructing Italian Fashion*; Belfanti, “Renaissance and ‘Made in Italy’,” 53–66; Steele, *Fifty Years of Fashion*; Blanco F., “The Postmodern Age: 1960–2010,” 99–111.
25 Pouillard, *Paris to New York*, 2.
26 Block, *Dressing Up*, 69–84.
27 “Les missions du DEFI”, DEFI; France, Sénat, “Article 17.” For the advent of the professional committees for economic development (CPDE) of which DEFI is an example, see: Dubé-Senécal, “Fashion's Diplomatic Role,” 13. For a summary of the succession of these aid plans, see: Grumbach, Histoires de la mode, 81–3.
28 Dubé-Senécal, *La mode française*, 138–9, 258.
29 Archives nationales de France (ANF hereafter), 19771635/22, Aid-to-couture Meeting Report, 9 June 1961, 3.
30 ANF, 19771638/3, CIRIT File D 6 Report, ‘Aide à la Couture Parisienne’, 9 May 1967, 2–3; For the percentages, see: ANF, 19771638/3, Untitled letter from CIRIT president, E. Senn, to CSCP president, 14 June 1967, 1; ANF, 19771635/50, CIRIT Meeting Minutes, 19 May 1967, 8.
31 ANF, 19771635/40, 1969 Activity Report, Undated, 2; ANF, 19830427/5, Annex ‘Rapport sur les manifestations de propaganda de l'année 1974’ of the CIRIT Report for File C 1108, 21 September 1974, 1; ANF, 19771635/40, CIRIT Report for File D 213, 24 November 1969, 3; ANF, 19771635/40, CIRIT Report for File D 213, ‘Aide à la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture (Propriété artistique, Propagande) Film sur la couture - Exposition de Buenos-Aires’, 15 June 1970, 2.
32 For an analysis of the Italian subsidies of their fashion industry see, especially: Di Giangirolamo, *Institutions for Fashion*, 110–12.
33 Pinchera and Rinallo, “Emergence of Italy,” 157–9.
34 Pinchera and Rinallo, “Emergence of Italy,” 170.
35 Mioche, *Le Plan Monnet*, 201; Margairaz, “Autour des accords Blum-Byrnes,” 469–70.
36 Gœtschel and Touchebœuf, *La IV^{e} République*, 124; Margairaz, *L'État, les finances et l'économie*, 1267.
37 ANF, 19771635/26, “Commissariat général du Plan de modernisation et d'équipement – Rapport définitif d'ensemble de la Commission de modernisation du textile,” 1948, 23, 103.
38 “Une diplomatie commerciale de prestige qui participa à l'affirmation de la grandeur recouvrée.” Badel, *Diplomatie et grands chantiers*, 319–20. We did the translation to English.
39 The countries and cities visited were: Caracas and Maracaibo in Venezuela, Bogota, Medellin, Quali and Baranquilla in Colombia, Quito and Guayaquil in Ecuador, Lima in Peru, Panama City in Panama, San Salvador in San Salvador, Mexico City in Mexico, Havana in Cuba, Kingston in Jamaica, Port-au-Prince in Haiti, San Juan in Puerto Rico, and Curaçao in Curaçao. ANF, 19771635/23, Untitled letter from J. Rouët to the president of the Aid-to-Couture Commission, August 25, 1954.
40 ANF, 19771635/21, Meeting Minutes from the aid-to-couture commission, January 29, 1953, 2.
41 “Je considère qu'une manifestation du genre de la vôtre contribue à faire connaître aux panaméens que la France demeure le pays de l'élégance et du bon goût et que ses couturiers sont à l'avant-garde de la mode féminine. À une époque où l'on a trop tendance à minimiser les

valeurs réelles au profit d'éphémères réalisations, nous nous devons de rappeler à l'étranger que la France possède toujours de grandes valeurs permanentes telle que la 'Haute Couture' que vous avez, si heureusement, représentée ici." ANF, 19771635/24, Untitled letter from Lionel Vasse, French ambassador in Panama, to Hélène Levacher of Christian Dior Export, March 24, 1955, 1. We did the translation to English.

42 Archives of the French Embassy in the United States, 4095, "Note sur l'organisation de Quinzaines françaises par de grands magasins américains," December 6, 1960. This is also studied in: Vincent Dubé-Senécal, "Fashion, Industry and Diplomacy," 17–19.

43 ANF, 19771635/19, CSCP Letter to the Government Commissioner, February 9, 1962; CSCP Report on Couture Events in Montréal, June 5, 1967, 1–2; ANF, 19771635/20, Letter from the State Controller to the Textile Office, June 16, 1967, 1–2.

44 These examples come from the following article: Dubé-Senécal, "Fashion's Diplomatic Role," 1–22. The letters are all part of the following folder: ANF, 19830427/18, Annex "Rapport sur les manifestations de propagande prévues pour 1976" to a letter from Jacques Mouclier, Couture Federation president, to the CIRIT president, August 4, 1976.

45 "A été un moyen d'action culturelle efficace." ANF, 19860427/18, Letter from Jean Louis Mandereau, French ambassador in Bolivia, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Film'mode Automne-Hiver 75/76'," September 19, 1975, 1. We did the translation to English.

46 For authors interested in the definitions of these terms and the links between them see, among others: Tulloch, "Style – Fashion-Dress," 273–304; Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*; Damhorst, Miller-Spillman and Michelman, *The Meanings of Dress*.

47 Goubau, "Note de lecture," 111–15.

48 Plato, "La République," Second volume, trad. Victor Cousin, quoted in Godart, ed., *Penser la mode*.

49 Simmel, "Fashion," 130–55.

50 Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*.

51 In addition to being the founder of *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, the first peer-reviewed scholarly journal in Fashion Studies, Valerie Steele has published and edited a host of books and articles that are key in fashion studies, among others: Steele, *Paris Fashion*; Steele, *Berg Companion to Fashion*.

52 Jennifer Craik has published and edited a host of books and articles that are key in fashion studies, among others: Craik, *Face of Fashion*; Craik, *Fashion*.

53 "Fashion Studies," Parsons School of Design. This is quoted in: Clark and Rottman. "Fashion Studies Takes on Politics," 188.

54 Crane, "Introduction," 2.

55 On the matter of the influence of sport in diplomacy see, among others: Redeker, "Sport as an Opiate of International Relations," 494–500; MacAloon, "Turn of Two Centuries," 31–44.

56 Melissen, "New Public Diplomacy," 5.

57 *CPD Blog*, "What's in the Work for Nicholas J. Cull?"

58 Cull, *Public Diplomacy*, 17.

59 Melissen, "New Public Diplomacy," 8.

60 Nye, *Bound to Lead*.

61 Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," 56.

62 Fitzpatrick, *Future of US Public Diplomacy*, 89.

63 On the matter of non-state actors in public diplomacy see, among others: Goodman, "Role of Business in Public Diplomacy," 5–7; Hocking, "Privatizing Diplomacy?," 147–52; La Porte, "Impact of 'Intermestic' Non-State Actors," 441–58; Muldoon, "Diplomacy of Business," 341–59.

64 Riordan, "Stop Inventing 'New Diplomacies'."

65 This definition is the one crafted by Madeleine Goubau in her doctoral thesis, in progress, on the theoretical conceptualization of dress as a tool for public diplomacy, from a communication perspective. As expected in the appropriation of the key concepts of a thesis, each facet of its formulation has been influenced by a vast corpus bringing together the nuanced thoughts of many authors in the field of public diplomacy. To name them all in this chapter would be impossible. For a digest of the most recent research concerns and perspectives that have guided this definition, see the collective work by Melissen and Wang, eds., *Debating Public Diplomacy*.

66 This communicational perspective borrows from the Palo Alto School. For an overview of its approach, see Picard and Marc, *L'École de Palo Alto*; For some of the foundation work of the Palo Alto School, see: Bateson and Ruesch, *Communication et société*; Watzlawick, *L'invention de la réalité*.
67 Friedman, "Justin Trudeau's Sock Diplomacy."

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Part III

Fashion as Business

13 Fashion Forecasting, Gender, and Artificial Intelligence

Lisa van Barneveld and Ben Wubs

> I think when we are talking about men and women, we also should consider their capacity to be persuasive and analytical. Technology, for example, draws more men in. My son is studying data science and my son-in-law is studying artificial intelligence, it is all men in their studies. The person who has to tell a convincing story to the client needs to be believable. I think that when it comes to fashion, women are generally easier to believe. The type of client will matter too, a CEO will expect different things than a designer.
>
> One of the interviewees

Forecasting fashion trends is a hidden practice of the fashion industry, but it nonetheless is a business service that is essential to the global fashion system. Fashion trend forecasters gather and share intelligence about colors, silhouettes, and fabrics. This is done through fabricating trend books, seminars, trend talks, or online reports on a subscription basis. Fashion trend forecasters are part of trend agencies or consultancy bureaus that provide business-to-business services (B2B). Trend forecasters function as the "insurance companies" for retailers and designers. They aim to solve the problem of imperfect information about trends and help during the initial development stages of garments. The fashion trend forecasting industry has its origin in the nineteenth century and has undergone several changes since then. Starting out as one-man operations, they organically developed from small to medium-sized style agencies in the twentieth century, which were often female-led. Gender stereotypes of the modern era benefited the role of women in the industry, who had "the eye" for spotting trends and had the better sensibility to determine what is "good taste."

Over the past decades, the nature of fashion trend forecasting has changed significantly due to the influx of capital and technology into the sector. The 1980s were a dream decade for fashion trend forecasters as the business environment in the fashion industry became more competitive and companies started to actively look for trends. Heightened consumer expectations were formed under the process of globalization, changes in the supply chain, and the advent of the Internet. Technological advancements changed how trends were analyzed and communicated. The rise of new and influential trend forecasting agencies in the early 2000s such as Worth Global Style Network (WGSN) coincided with the digital transformation of society. Traditional fashion trend forecasting agencies were facing a backlash as their work was gradually branded as "opinionated guesswork."[1] The limitations of traditional fashion trend forecasting along with the emergence of big data inspired newer trend agencies to explore novel ways of trend forecasting. Furthermore, fashion and technology have been historically gendered,

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as they are respectively seen as feminine and masculine industries. Combining these two worlds in fashion trend forecasting can shine a light on how gender continues to dominate life at work. Gender stereotypes in the workplace are becoming a much-talked-about topic as they have significant influence on the gender balance in companies and thus on their performance. Since there is only limited evidence available concerning the development of the gender balance in the fashion trend forecasting industry after the 1980s, this chapter aims to answer the following question: did the technological advancements of the last four decades have had an influence on the gender balance in the fashion trend forecasting industry in Europe? The chapter is based on the most important secondary literature, written by professionals as well as academics, and on 12 interviews with professional fashion forecasters in 2021, all living in Europe. The latter also explains the focus on this continent.

Literature Review

Fashion trend forecasting has been described by various authors as entailing a "mystical" approach. This is because many consumers are not aware of the fact that fashion trend forecasting exists, let alone the significant impact it has on fashion retailers and designers. Qualities such as developing "the eye" or having aesthetic sensibility seem to be a reoccurring pattern. The practice of fashion trend forecasting entails both scientific and creative methods. Fashion forecasters need to have a profound understanding of trends and possess a certain level of experience in the fashion industry.[2] A significant number of the books cited here, are (hand)books for practitioners, while other publications take a more academic and historical approach. Rita Perna's book *Fashion Forecasting: A Mystery or a Method?* attempts to highlight the importance of "seeing" and using intuition in developing forecasts. Published in 1987, the book targeted students and trade professionals and was one of the first practical works on the subject.[3] By describing the various actors in the fashion industry and their interrelationships, the book aims to describe who is behind the formulation of trends in the industry and what the consequences are. Evelyn L. Brannon combines traditional and digital forecasting approaches to showcase how "seeing" is a constitutive part of fashion trend forecasting. Her book, *Fashion Forecasting*, published in 2005, is written for students in fashion and retail practitioners.[4] Drawing on her experience of working as a forecaster for Butterick Fashion Marketing in New York, she provides an insider perspective. Brannon sees forecasting as a process of negotiation between the fashion industry and the consumer. She also points to the occurrence of megatrends, which cross industry lines and mirror economic cycles. These megatrends involve shifts in lifestyles and lead to fast fashion firms capitalizing on delivering new styles within a short period.[5] Brannon applies various theories and places importance on the *Zeitgeist* as an expression of modernity and culture. To look forward, a forecaster must have a clear view of the past and get a grip of how styles respond to and are shaped by the spirit of the times. Intuition is necessary to determine what is important and "cool."[6] In 2006, Ingrid Giertz-Mårtenson, an experienced Swedish fashion forecaster, analyzed trend agencies that disseminate trend information through seminars and consultancies. She describes the ability to spot trends and combining this with intuition as an important skill for fashion trend forecasters.[7] Giertz-Mårtenson views developments in the fashion forecasting field as part of the post-modern world, where new players keep entering the field and thrive on the risk element in fashion. She makes a distinction between the traditional forecasting agency and the online forecasting agencies such as WGSN, however, is not explaining the importance of digitalization in fashion trend forecasting.[8]

Design futurist Bradley Quinn published his book *Fashion Futures* in 2012.[9] Quinn focuses on future developments in the fashion industry, whereby technological advancements play a big role. He investigates the growing attention towards emerging trends and the role that fashion trend forecasters play in shaping the future of fashion.[10] The use of new platforms to disseminate trends and products will also change how fashion trend forecasters carry out their jobs. Quinn stresses the significance of online sources to conduct market research and provide insights into the future. The book *Fashion Trends: Analysis and Forecasting* by Endeok Kim, Ann Marie Fiore, and Hyejeong Kim, published in 2013, provides an overview of the central concepts in fashion trend forecasting and how they are employed by various professionals in the fashion industry.[11] The internet and social media have led to new ways of disseminating trends, as well as to the birth of megatrends such as sustainability and social responsibility. Forecasting is defined as a creative and analytical process in which fashion trend forecasters have to use their intuition. The book helps get insights on the processes and methods of fashion trend forecasting, its gatekeepers, and the presentation of fashion trend forecasting data in different formats. It connects the importance of intuition alongside the commercial role that fashion forecasters play. Moreover, it links the importance of cultural and social changes in the fashion industry to the process of digitalization. The book *The Trendmakers: Behind the Scenes of the Global Fashion Industry,* written by Jenny Lantz, published in 2016, shows how fashion, capitalism, and culture all intersect within the global trend machine.[12] She argues that a company like trend agency WGSN in London is a driving force behind the creation of trends since its huge customer base is following its directions. Lantz, therefore, argues that trend forecasting can be a self-fulfilling prophecy at times.[13] She also states that consumers are acquiring more power in defining what the final trend will be and she pays more attention to digitalization.[14] *The Fashion Forecasters: A Hidden History of Color and Trend Prediction*, edited by Regina Lee Blaszczyk and Ben Wubs and published in 2018, provides archival research which is imperative to analyze the historical development of fashion trend forecasting.[15] It claims that forecasters are an important intermediary business in the global fashion industry. Moreover, the book is paying attention to the cultural aspects of the industry. By including a series of cultural biographies of influential forecasters and forecasting entities, a rich oral history is collected that portrays the "human element" in fashion trend forecasting.[16] An elaborate timeline is covered throughout the book, starting in the nineteenth century and ending in the twenty-first century, when digitalization has become the most important development in the industry. Blaszczyk and Wubs, however, suggest that the human eye and human mind are still among the best technologies of fashion trend forecasting.[17]

Research on AI in fashion trend forecasting is still limited as key developments in the area of machine learning only occurred in 2016, which opened a whole new spectrum of opportunities.[18] In 2020, Mikayla Dubreuil and Sheng Lu published "Traditional vs. big-data fashion trend forecasting: an examination using WGSN and EDITED."[19] The paper seeks to find similarities and differences between the results of traditional designer-based fashion trend forecasts with trend forecasts generated by big-data tools. They did so by comparing 20 WGSN traditional fashion trend forecasts to 20 trend forecasts developed by EDITED. The latter is a data analytics company that specializes in fashion, their software is trained to recognize apparel products. Their database consists of inventory and assortment information of over 30 million apparel products sold by more than 90,000 retailers in the United States. The findings showed that EDITED could easily monitor the popularity of colors and patterns, but some of the design details were hard to quantify. The authors state that big data makes it easier to understand long-term market dynamics and changing customer needs and tastes as it uses extensive historical records. However, big data does find it difficult to understand and process important cultural factors that influence fashion trends. Moreover, it does not possess the skills to perform creative thinking processes or an aesthetic perspective to leverage out-of-the-box ideas. The authors conclude that big data can never fully replace trend forecasters and designers.

The Evolution of Fashion Forecasting

The fashion industry consists of a large network of business professionals that merge creativity and innovation to cater to consumers' needs. One of the important, but often overlooked, actors inside this web are the fashion trend forecasters. Their job consists of continuously observing the world around them, to determine the likely direction of fashion change.[20] Fashion changes under the influence of world events, subcultures, social changes, technological innovations, world events, the entertainment sector, and fashion leaders.[21] Fashion trend forecasting is a highly creative process that influences important decisions made by fashion retailers and designers at the beginning of producing a collection. Furthermore, it affects decisions regarding promotional campaigns and minimizing stock-out.[22] It is a multi-faceted process that includes (1) recognizing emerging trends in society; (2) anticipating the pace of change; (3) determining the direction of this change; and (4) understanding consumer preferences. It is therefore characterized as having both scientific and intuitive elements.[23]

Paris has played a dominant role in the dissemination of fashion trends starting from the court of Louis XIV. In the 1860s, the rise of haute couture led to the institutionalization of trend patterns and the introduction of seasonal collections. Some of these formats continue until the present day but in a different manner. In France, the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture* set the standards to limit competition from foreign department stores that used couture designs to mass-produce garments. As a reaction, young sketch artists made copies of the designs made by Parisian fashion designers during influential couture shows in the early 1900s. They are seen as the forerunners of traditional fashion trend forecasting companies as they sold their sketches to American fashion brands that were unable to attend the couture shows. It was a fast and efficient way to gain knowledge of the latest designs, as the media would communicate trends much slower.[24] During the 1920s, fashion production cycles were mainly based in Paris and department stores were flourishing. This led to the professionalization of trend reporting services with the emergence of so-called *stylistes*. Being a styliste meant that foreign department store buyers were stationed in Paris to identify trends for their store. This developed into in-house consulting departments that were known as *Bureaux du Style*. It is important to note that these in-house services mainly employed women. However, the first fashion trend consultancy company, Tobe Associates, was founded in 1927 in the United States by Miss Tobé. She started her career in Paris as a trend-watcher for the department store Franklin Simon but later became famous for issuing regular fashion trend reports in New York called the Tobé Report.[25]

After World War II, the dominance of Paris and the dynamics of trends became contested by the mass production of garments in standard sizes. Consequently, European agencies were increasingly seen as noteworthy *stylistes* and they founded independent bureaus.[26] The 1950s and 1960s witnessed social and political changes reflected in the so-called youth culture. New trends bubbled up from subcultures and the streets of new fashion cities. In London, for example, Mary Quant, became the face of British prêt-à-porter. This type of industrialized clothing, also known as ready-to-wear, signified the importance of customers being the accelerators of trends. These changes in the world of fashion made it even more important for retailers and designers to get assistance in determining what is on-trend.[27] The 1970s and 1980s are described as the dream decades for fashion trend forecasters. These are also the years that well-known international fashion trend forecasting agencies such as Nelly Rodi and Trend Union by Lidewij Edelkoort were born. A big part of the textile and clothing production moved offshore to the Global South. This process started in the late 1960s and continued to the early 1990s, which resulted in budget cuts for fashion trend forecasting agencies worldwide. Heightened consumer expectations and competition became more intense due to the introduction of fast fashion. Fast fashion is based on product innovation that made it possible to produce inexpensive, on-trend styles that are available for approximately four weeks (see the chapter by José Antonio Miranda and Alba Roldan in the present volume for more on fast fashion).[28] Fashion trend forecasting has always been labor-intensive as it entailed finding a way through large streams of information and creating elaborate color cards and trend books. New technologies such as the worldwide web, fashion blogs, and social media have all contributed to the increasing pace of fashion information communication. Traditional fashion trend forecasters needed to solve the problems of imperfect information. Consumer taste is always evolving and guessing what is considered as "trendy" next, evolves even quicker in times of mass consumption. Hence it is more difficult to determine which garments should be produced and for what price.[29]

Fashion trend forecasting is often viewed as a matter of "crystal ball gazing."[30] This stems from the fact that the methodology behind it is not formalized. There are, however, certain strategies that many fashion trend forecasters use. *Future studies* is the umbrella term for research concerned with the future. "Style editor" Sam Cole identifies three broad categories that are attached to the study of the future. First, forecasting, which is classified as a mathematical extrapolation-based model. Second, polling is concerned with what businesses and consumers are expected to need and want in the future. Third, envisioning compromises the storytelling and intuitive part of visualizing the future. Fashion trend forecasting combines all three methods but mainly focuses on continuously "scanning" what is happening in the world.[31] The output of fashion trend forecasters is defined as formal trend sources. The different formats of formal trend sources are trend and color books, trend presentations, webinars, consultancies, and online reports. Clients use these trend sources to inform their businesses and get inspired. Fashion trend forecasters need to ensure that the images and stories developed in the formal trend sources are stimulating.[32] It is often argued that fashion trend forecasting can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, as the more charismatic and authoritative the messengers, the more probable the predictions come true.[33]

The lack of consensus about fashion trend forecasting methodologies, definitions, and concepts results in the ambiguous nature of the vocabulary used in formal trend sources.[34] Fashion trend forecasters carry out multidisciplinary research, based on a collaborative approach with expert scholars in related areas such as sociologists, scientists, economists, and marketers.[35] Moreover, they borrow established stories and concepts surrounding styles, fabrics, and colors from the fashion field. An example is the wide use of Pantone color swatches in presenting trends, as designers use these to create their garments.[36] In recent years, there has been a growing need of supporting the gathered data with graphs and statistics. It is important to present proof points or tangible validation as fashion trend forecasters are continuously "framing" trends as developments of the previous seasons. The storytelling aspect remains an important source of inspiration for designers and fashion retailers. Using visually compelling evidence to translate the big picture into a few key trends is an important point of direction. It tends to display the forecasters' view on the interpretation of the data. The reputation of the forecaster functions as part of the proof.[37] There is a certain political and discursive power embedded in formal trend resources.[38] Fashion trend forecasters view their position as an opportunity to act as generators of change.

Fashion trend forecasting can thus be viewed as both a science and a form of art. The science part rests on the use of analytical concepts and mathematical models that facilitate the prediction of trends in an organized way. The art part lies in using intuition and storytelling in creative ways. As the fashion industry continues to evolve and the rate of fashion change accelerates, forecasters must continue to soak up every aspect of the social context. As the risks for retailers and designers in the fast-paced global economy keep on growing, forecasting has a great influence on several important business decisions, including what product lines to create, how to advertise products, minimizing stock-out, and how to penetrate new markets. The role of the forecaster is making sense of the information at hand and presenting it in a way that is inspiring, familiar, accessible, and relevant. With the proliferation of trends from nearly everywhere, new technologies can increase the quantity and quality of data and its synthesis.

Female Entrepreneurship: The Industry

When looking at the fashion trend forecasting industry from a historical perspective, one notices the dominance of female fashion trend forecasters. There is one common denominator when looking at the fashion trend forecasting industry starting from the *stylistes* at Bureaux du Style, towards the early professionalization of fashion trend forecasting with Tobe Associates and present-day gurus like Lidewij Edelkoort and Nelly Rodi.[39] It displays high levels of female entrepreneurship, although there were also prominent men working in the profession, such as the sample makers of the nineteenth century, and Edward Bernays and Amos Parish during the interwar period. But what made females outnumber the males in the fashion trend forecasting industry? The answer lies in the gender stereotypes of the modern era. Gender stereotypes are preconceived social and cultural ideas that assign certain characteristics and roles to both men and women. Angela McRobbie acknowledges that fashion is viewed as a sector that draws upon many of the traditional skills and interests assigned to females, like clothing, communication, and aesthetics.[40] Moreover, women supposedly have higher levels of taste and "the eye" for spotting trends. It was scientifically proven that women were less color blind than men.[41] As recognizing and determining trendy colors is a vital part of fashion trend forecasting, women were being viewed as "tastemakers" in this field.[42] The fashion industry has been caught up in a virtuous cycle in which gendered skills and attributes are stimulated. Fashion trend forecasting does not follow a formal methodology, but its process plays well into the perceived strengths of women.[43] Nevertheless, the fashion trend forecasting industry allowed women to build their business skills, become entrepreneurs and develop great careers that were not possible in various other fields.

Business around the world has always been gendered, the jobs that men and women take up are direct outcomes of the cultural, institutional, social, and biological environment.[44] Gender stereotypes are explicit in societal discourse, as language perpetuates the idea that women have the skills that are compatible with the fashion world. Within this cycle, cultural conceptions are continuously perpetuated and internalized.[45] Moreover, these stereotypes also affect the access to resources one can access to build a career. Resources exist in multiple forms, including human capital (experience and education), social capital (mentors and networks), and cognitive capital (motivation and interest).[46] Fashion is often perceived as less "stable" than other sectors. Its nature is mostly subjective, meaning it does not always rely on rational decision making. The fashion industry, from early on, provided women with countless opportunities to build meaningful careers. Joanne Entwistle positions fashion in the context of aesthetic economies, where emotional reactions to a garment rule its success. Being immersed in the fashion system generates the aesthetic values a fashion trend forecaster needs to thrive within the industry.[47] Female fashion trend forecasters continuously legitimized themselves by proclaiming their levels of tacit aesthetic knowledge, as they quickly recognize what is on trend and what will be popular in the future. This knowledge is often displayed in metaphors like "gut instinct" or "having an eye." The connection with the bodily senses shows how this knowledge is difficult to define properly.[48] And how harder it is to define this knowledge properly, the more cultural conceptions came into play to strengthen female's position. Fashion trend forecasters are not only expected to have profound knowledge of the fashion industry, they also need to have experience in the so-called fashion field. Jenny Lantz defines the fashion field as influential individuals in the fashion industry such as celebrities, stylists, consumers, fashion trend forecasters, editors, and buyers. Likewise, organizations, events, and institutions such as fashion magazines, trade fairs, and fashion schools play a huge role. Trends are produced and distributed inside the framework of the fashion field.[49] In turn, symbolic boundaries are created that determine what can be regarded as fashion.[50] The female fashion trend forecasters show how they established themselves within this system. Nonetheless, finding their way into the system did not suffice. Female fashion trend forecasters also had to play their strengths when it comes to gathering information and selling it to the client.

Being a successful fashion trend forecaster means mastering the different information gathering stages. Information gathering consists of three aspects: environment, products, and market. The environment means scanning for changes in demographics, culture, economics, politics, and culture. Products are researched based on their materials, silhouette, and color. Market research is built on analyzing sales records and consumer behavior. All three aspects feature observation, data gathering, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis.[51] However, the biggest part of conducting trend research happens on an emotional level. Sensemaking and intuition are key to formulate future trends, based on the past, present, and future.[52] Pierre Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to describe how social entities perceive the world around them and react to it. The habitus is formed out of being immersed in the fashion flow, through which a "feel for the game" is developed.[53] Trend forecasters use their experience in the fashion field, which allows them to understand the language surrounding fashion and build a reputation. Moreover, intuition is believed to advance with age and experience. Being established in the industry, led to many opportunities.[54]

After the information gathering stages, the fashion trend forecaster has to "sell" the trend research to the client. Fashion trend forecasters need to master the storytelling aspect, which makes use of language that can touch upon cognitive and emotional levels. It is equally important to lay out the information in an easily understandable manner for both creative and business teams.[55] Using visually compelling evidence to translate the big picture into a few key trends is an important point of direction. It tends to display the forecasters' view on the interpretation of the data. The reputation of the forecaster functions as part of the proof.[56] Fashion trend forecasters demonstrate that the business of fashion not only entails selling clothes but also selling ideas. Nonetheless, it is not just a matter of "gazing at a crystal ball," it is a creative process that can be understood and applied by people who possess the required tools and knowledge.[57] Interviews with various notable fashion trend forecasters point towards the fact that women are found to be more believable when it comes to fashion. Hence, that is why female fashion trend forecasters often succeeded in telling a convincing story to the client. Even though the levels of female entrepreneurship in the fashion trend forecasting industry are admirable, one has to think about the underlying gender stereotypes that have set this process into motion. The fashion trend forecasting industry remains very much female dominated as a dominant group of influential traditional fashion trend forecasters, such as Lidewij Edelkoort, have been in power for a long time and capitalize on their historical legacies.[58] Female fashion trend forecasters have thus been able to contribute greatly to the dynamic fashion trend forecasting industry, which has become booming business due to the influx of digital technologies.

Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in Fashion Forecasting

The 1980s were a decade of change for fashion trend forecasters as the business environment in the fashion industry became more competitive and companies started to actively look for trends. Additionally, heightened consumer expectations were formed under the process of globalization, changes in the supply chain, and the advent of the internet in the 1990s. Technological advancements changed how trends were analyzed and communicated. The rise of new and influential trend forecasting agencies in the early 2000s such as Worth Global Style Network (WGSN) coincided with the digital transformation of society.[59] The Fourth Industrial Revolution has allowed the fashion industry to use large streams of data that was not financially or technically feasible before. The datafication of fashion made it easier to monitor and analyze consumer behavior, as also discussed in the chapter by Miranda and Roldan in this volume.[60] The limitations of traditional fashion trend forecasting along with the emergence of fashion big data inspired newer trend agencies to explore novel ways of trend forecasting. Big data refers to large data sets that require artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze them. One of the most recent developments in the fashion trend forecasting industry is the gradual adoption of AI systems in the analysis of trends. Even though this process is still in its infancy, there certainly is optimism regarding its use.

The concept of mediatization claims that media has infiltrated all aspects of daily life, ranging from the way people behave to the mechanics behind societal institutions. Media thus holds a significant amount of transformative power.[61] E-commerce and social media have changed how people interact with fashion, as they are used to the ability of quickly seeing and buying anything they want from anywhere in the world.[62] Digital technologies thus significantly alter the way fashion moves throughout society, as anyone is in the position to comment or disseminate fashion information. Labeling or adding a hashtag to trends makes them easily searchable and transmittable.[63] Accordingly, fashion trend forecasters must make use of social media to generate trend information. Data also had a significant influence on the life span of fashion trends. In 1998, the life span of a fashion trend was approximately one year; in 2010, this was only a few weeks; and today, it is nearly every two days.[64] As a result, the fashion trend forecasting business has gradually expanded the variety of formats for trend forecasts. Most trend presentations are digitally formatted and can be downloaded by clients. Trend agencies' websites are available by subscription and include extensive information on a variety of trend angles, often from a cross-industry perspective.[65]

Within the fashion trend forecasting field, one can see a clear distinction between traditional trend forecasting agencies and data-led forecasting agencies. Traditional trend forecasting encompasses the use of visionary-based forecasting and qualitative market research.[66] They use their historical legacies, extensive fashion capital that is acquired in the fashion field and the anthropological frameworks they use to understand the long-term trend developments. They claim that their online competitors are not engaging in fashion trend forecasting, but rather conduct "trend watching" or "reporting" as they inform retailers based on historical data.[67] Nevertheless, the current pace of the global economy has accelerated the level of unpredictability in fashion as trends can pop up from nearly everywhere. The data-led forecasting agencies are turning to the world of big data to predict the future of fashion. However, not all consumers want to be part of these fast fashion cycles and turn to sustainable or vintage clothing. Both topics are considered very popular on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Specific pieces, such as Varsity jackets or designer bags, become popular out of nowhere and consumers try to find clothes or accessories that fit within these trends. Finding out where these ideas come from and what their effect will be on fashion, used materials and its prices are equally hard to track.

Predicting change and reducing risk has never been more important than in today's competitive fashion landscape. "Getting it right" means finding an efficient way through all the "noise" that is being produced. This has led to the gradual adaptation of AI in the fashion trend forecasting industry. AI is said to have the potential to reduce forecasting errors by 25 percent based on mining of historical fashion data. When combining AI with human expertise, the errors can be reduced up to 50 percent.[68] At the heart of adopting this AI approach, is finding quality datasets and knowing how to subtract meaning from them. These datasets should incorporate different types of data such as social media posts, runway images, e-commerce photos, and street snapshots.[69] The use of AI systems in fashion trend forecasting is loosely based on existing fashion theories. These theories suggest that design details, patterns and color are key in determining trends. With the pace of the current fast-fashion market, trend forecasts need to be detailed and tailored to the client.[70]

From a business point of view, providing merchandisers and buyers with tangible validation is a must, as their world is already guided by the use of data. Fashion trend forecasting agencies find that AI systems provide a fast way of evaluating all fashion-related data in real-time, while also generating an in-depth understanding of how the market has been responding from a long-term perspective. Another benefit is that AI can make the labor-intensive, time-consuming practices of traditional fashion trend forecasting more efficient. However, the potential and ability to incorporate AI lies with fashion trend forecasting agencies that possess the necessary financial resources and technological know-how. Likewise, path-dependency and associated lock-in effects significantly influence the organizational and managerial features of trend agencies. In recent years, the fashion trend forecasting industry has witnessed a significant scale enlargement as companies started to realize the value of trend information. Tech companies such as IBM have picked up on the opportunities that cooperating with fashion trend forecasting can bring. Within the fashion trend forecasting industry itself, the acquisition of independent trend forecasting agencies by large capital groups show how it has become big business. This accelerates the use of fashion trend forecasting into daily work routines and product innovation processes, within and beyond the fashion industry. This is because fashion trend forecasts are so elaborate that it incorporates information on demographics, popular culture, technology, and beauty. In today's global economy, a variety of sectors are becoming interrelated such as interior design, marketing, consulting, and food and drink as seen on the website of Worth Global Style Network (WGSN).

Nonetheless, some have placed question marks on AI's ability to capture the creative core that is at the heart of the fashion industry. The human touch and mind of the fashion trend forecaster is an asset that remains of substantial importance.[71] According to DuBreuil and Lu, AI systems can predict more stable and coherent trends based on color. It can also easily monitor the popularity of all available patterns in the market. Design and style details, on the other hand, are hard to quantify.[72] Various human elements such as experience, intuition, and reputation are needed to back up the logic of the AI decision-making process. The biggest difficulty when it comes to incorporating AI in fashion trend forecasting is trying to understand important cultural factors that influence fashion trends. Societal attitudes, political movements, and shifts in ethics are hard to measure. The fundamental part of fashion trend forecasting lies in discovering what "bonds" a consumer to a fashion product as they are based on emotional and tactile preferences.[73] Moreover, AI systems do not possess the level of tacit aesthetic knowledge that fashion trend forecasters have trained by being emerged in the fashion field. The lack of creative thinking skills can result in overlooking consumers' wishes for out-of-the-box designs that are not just based on the analysis of historical data.[74] The risk with using AI to extract comes with trend agencies being blindsided by the data. Datasets contain so much noise that is important to interpret the information correctly and not just make assumptions.[75] Therefore, fashion trend forecasting agencies are advocating for relying on both humans and technology. Expert minds are needed to continuously update the technology, place their judgments, and revise the predictions that AI makes.

Voices of the Fashion Forecasters

This section is based on 12 interviews with mainly European fashion forecasters and discusses the growing importance of AI systems in developing fashion trend forecasts, as well as the call for finding a balance between machines and the mind of the forecaster.[76] Furthermore, it explores how the gender balance in fashion trend forecasting has evolved over the last four decades. It does so by displaying how fashion trend forecasters have experienced the gender balance within their trend agencies while linking it to the overall importance of achieving gender balance for the future of fashion trend forecasting agencies.

The findings of the interviews point to an increase in the general awareness of and interest in trend information. Fashion retailers have made it part of their daily routine to read online subscription-based trend reports, as they are a quick and easy way to be continuously updated on the world around them. Furthermore, most of the interviewees have witnessed an increase of merchandisers and buyers as clients, instead of designers. What distinguishes them from working with designers is that they are looking for tangible validation based on data, instead of extensive storytelling and visuals.

The digital transformation of society has led to the existence of large streams of data. In the current era of information overload and the datafication of fashion, the task of finding useful information through all the noise is harder than ever. The fashion industry remains highly commercial. Large capital groups, such as British media conglomerate East Midland Allied Press (EMAP), have capitalized on the growing importance of the fashion trend forecasting industry and contributed to the fragmentation of the level playing field. These capital groups have the financial resources and technological know-how to run data-led agencies. The landscape of fashion trend forecasting will most likely witness a growing divide between traditional and data-led trend agencies. Traditional trend agencies are not able to incorporate economies of scale, consequently, they must find a niche way of operating while remaining highly creative to distinguish themselves. After the economic recession of 2008, the budgets for fashion trend forecasting have shrunk. Merchandisers and buyers are looking to carefully curate their strategies based on tangible expert advice that is founded upon a data-driven approach. Data-led trend agencies have started to gradually incorporate AI systems to make sense of large amounts of data. These AI systems use annotated datasets to reduce the labor-intensive practices of traditional fashion trend forecasting. The data-led forecasting agencies are often divided into different teams which focus on product, marketing, data, and fashion. Their online presence is their prime asset, which comes with having to find new ways to create a viral buzz and attract clients.

Most of the interviewees are open-minded about using AI, but some of them are facing financial and knowledge constraints. This mostly has to do with path-dependency and correlated lock-in effects. The rise in open-sourced data and software tools, as well as the continuous development of AI technologies, increases the likeliness for traditional trend agencies to incorporate AI somewhere in the future. Nonetheless, the seeming paradox between creativity and technology is a point of debate. The difficulty in deciphering the context of societal issues, as well as displaying the tactile and emotional value of garments through AI systems calls for a human-centered approach. The overall sentiment of the interviews showed that fashion trend forecasters are extremely innovation-focused, but their definitions of the word fluctuate. Producing out-of-the-box ideas and synthesizing different aspects of research can be done in numerous ways. Therefore, AI systems should be complementary to the forecasters' touch, instead of replacing it. Moreover, datasets that are used to train AI systems can benefit greatly from annotations made by industry experts. Fashion trend forecasters should have the final say in constructing formal trend sources based on the clients' attitude, brand image, storytelling, and close observation of the *Zeitgeist*. Fashion study scholar Barbara Vinken popularized this term in her book *Fashion Zeitgeist: Trends and Cycles in the Fashion System.*[77] She highlights the importance of fashion's ability to reflect the signs of a time and culture, whereby one thus needs to consider the politics and philosophies that direct the sense of style around the globe. Fashion trend forecasters possess the skills to pin down the general cultural, social, or political climate and mood that go hand in hand with the present time.[78] This is very hard to do for an AI system.

What can be concluded is that technological advancements will not take over the role of the forecaster but will only bolster their intuitive and creative processes. Making sure the algorithms are transparent and accountable should be on top of the trend forecasting agencies' list as the fashion industry already fears algocracy. The scientific and intuitive aspects of fashion trend forecasting should be integrated, instead of being viewed as opposites. Every interview participant acknowledges that AI constitutes the future of fashion trend forecasting, even though it is hard to determine the time frame in which these changes are likely to occur. The human element remains important for various reasons, such as enhancing the explainability of AI systems, tailoring the trend forecasts to the clients' attitude and uncovering the deeper meaning behind changing consumer sentiments and their effect on trends.

The next overarching theme of the interviews is the persistence of female dominance. Gender is a social construction that continues to dominate the workplace. Both fashion and technology have historically been gendered. The constructed societal image of a sector and its workforce can have profound effects on achieving gender balance. Fashion trend forecasting remains female-dominated as it is observed as a feminized industry. It still holds structures and practices in place that reinforce the division of labor along gender lines. The forecasters' touch on developing fashion trend forecasts, the economies of scale, and the incorporation of new complicated technologies have consequences for the development of the gender balance in trend agencies.

Interviews were conducted with the biggest trend agencies in Europe, such as Stylus, Elementi Moda, WGSN, Heuritech, Fashion Snoops, and Geraldine Wharry Trend Atelier. The interviewees all mentioned how forecasters' educational backgrounds already display a skewed male-female ratio as they are often related to the field of fashion. The choice of education is impacted by popular and influential belief systems that form the idea that women belong in the sphere of fashion. Fashion trend forecasting agency Fashion Snoops states in the conducted interview that women are generally found to be more believable when it comes to fashion. Hence, that is why female fashion trend forecasters can tell a convincing story to the client. Cultural conceptions also limit access to opportunities when it comes to finding a job in either fashion trend forecasting or AI, as men and women continue to be impacted by gender stereotypes. Stereotypes form significant barriers to talented people wanting to go into both traditional and data-led fashion trend forecasting, as told by a fashion trend forecaster at UK agency Stylus. Consequently, it also affects the long-term success of trend agencies. These issues are very much embedded in the everyday practices of work and changing them requires hard work.

What stood out from the interviews is that 8 out of 12 participants talked about not making a distinction between male or female. The participants either only looked at the competencies of their employees or never paid attention to the distinction between male or female to begin with. Only one participant spoke about active company policies around gender. Even though present-day society is becoming more aware of the issues surrounding gender in the workplace, it needs to be given more attention. All interview participants stated that they see value in collaborating inside a team, especially when this team is made up out of mixed genders. It provides the ability to widen research, understand clients better, incorporate different points of views and facilitates out-of-the-box ideas. Communication and collaboration between different teams emerged as important as well because it allows fashion trend forecasters to provide context and extract in-depth meaning from the gathered trend information.

The changing nature of the fashion trend forecasting industry has led to a divide between traditional and data-led forecasting agencies. The use of AI in fashion trend forecasting is becoming more widespread due to the existence of large streams of data and the changing sentiments in the industry. However, AI needs to be complementary to the forecasters' touch. When asking interviewees about the influence of technological advancements on the gender balance in their trend agencies answers such as "I never thought of this, what an interesting topic" or "this caused me to reflect on my own position" were given. The interviewees from data-led fashion trend forecasting agencies all stated that the tech departments were dominated by males. The main issue of excluding women from AI is that male developers can unconsciously insert their implicit biases into its creation. Different stages of AI systems such as data sampling, algorithm selection, evaluation metrics, and the annotation of datasets can be impacted by this. Trend agencies must contextualize these issues and address the deeper layers behind them, to adjust the dominant structures that govern present-day workplaces. Furthermore, due to the influx of technology, more men came into the fashion trend forecasting industry. However, the biggest part is only responsible for working with and updating the AI systems, while they are not actively working as fashion trend forecasters. Fashion trend forecasting agencies are not consciously aware of the fact that the industry is still very much female-dominated and what kind of consequences this can have for attracting new talents. Gender blind managers play a huge role in this process. Being gender blind means that there is a lack of awareness about how men and women in the workplace are impacted by their different needs, roles, and status in society. If fashion trend forecasting agencies fail to implement gender-blind programs, policies, and attitudes, they will maintain the status quo. As a result, the unequal structure of the gender balance will continue to exist. These biases are even harder to battle in "majority-group" environments like tech departments in data-led trend agencies. The role of achieving gender balance is vital, but it often triggers emotional reactions from both men and women. If fashion trend agencies want to bring this topic to light, it is important to use "gender bilingual" language. Managers need to actively contribute to educate their workforce on these topics and facilitate mentorships. Just looking at competencies when hiring staff will not lead to a gender-inclusive workplace. Relatively new fashion trend forecasting agencies may have an advantage here, as it is a lot easier to fix a company culture early before it becomes systemic.[79]

The conducted interviews with key players in the fashion trend forecasting industry point out that achieving gender balance is essential for fashion trend forecasting agencies. This circulates back to the idea that mixing genders and working together leads to better outcomes, such as coming up with innovative ideas and connecting with the client on a deeper level. There is a strong business case for a gender-balanced workplace, as it can boost financial performance and increases the ability to attract and retain talent. Moreover, it can contribute to penetrating untapped markets and getting a competitive edge over competitors. More creative and innovative decisions come from working in mixed teams as there are different point of views incorporated. It can also bring fashion trend forecasting agencies closer to clients with a variety of backgrounds and strategic goals.[80] It is also important for different teams inside trend agencies to facilitate communication, especially since they are becoming big business. Otherwise, workflows can be slowed down, decision-making will be complex and people will have fewer opportunities to develop knowledge in different areas. Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, CEO of gender consultancy company 20-first, claims that for companies to think different, a different balance needs to be brought to the table. Attracting people who represent the talent and markets of the future, regardless of their gender, can bring fresh ideas forward. Furthermore, it also contributes to attracting a larger pool of clients.[81] Observing the many different layers of society in the globalized world of fashion requires diverse teams who operate from different research areas and locations. Both traditional and data-led forecasting agencies need to work on their issues as trend research needs to reflect the experiences and viewpoints of both men and women.

Conclusions

The fashion trend forecasting industry is essential to the global fashion system. Not many people are aware of the influence the industry holds on determining what is to be considered fashion. The industry has its origins in the nineteenth century and became professionalized as a reaction to the dissolution of Paris as the dictator of style. Fashion trend forecasting developed from a one-man operation to small- and medium-sized trend forecasting agencies which were often led by females. Gender stereotypes of the modern era contributed to providing women in fashion with the opportunity to develop meaningful careers, entrepreneurial skills, and leadership positions that were not possible in many other sectors. Women were described as having "the eye" for spotting trends and greater sensibility towards determining what is "good taste." Moreover, it was scientifically proven that they were less color blind, as determining the right color is a crucial part of producing fashion. The business of fashion trend forecasting has changed significantly due to the digital transformation of society. As a result, this chapter aimed to research if the technological advancements of the last four decades have influenced the gender balance in the fashion trend forecasting industry in Europe.

Within the fashion trend forecasting industry itself, the acquisitions of independent trend forecasting agencies by large capital groups show how it has become big business. The attention for trend forecasting analysis has been facilitated by the change from printed trend information to online trend information. The number of online subscription-based trend services is increasing. The advantages of these new business models are the immediate global availability and the continuously updated content. Consequently, fashion trend forecasting is becoming integrated into daily work routines and product innovation processes. One of the most recent developments in the fashion trend forecasting industry is the gradual adoption of AI systems in the analysis of trends. Even though this process is still in its infancy, there certainly is optimism regarding its use. Merchandisers and buyers are increasingly seeking out the help of fashion trend forecasting agencies. Their world is already guided by using data, so providing them with tangible validation is necessary. AI systems provide a fast way of evaluating all fashion-related data in real-time, while also generating an in-depth understanding of how the market has been responding from a long-term perspective. Moreover, AI can make the labor-intensive, time-consuming practices of traditional fashion trend forecasting more efficient through web crawling various social media platforms. The potential and ability to incorporate AI lies with fashion trend forecasting agencies that possess the necessary financial resources and technological know-how. Likewise, path-dependency and associated lock-in effects significantly influence the organizational and managerial features of trend agencies.

Nonetheless, planning the future of fashion will never be an exact science. AI systems are regarded unsuitable for some qualities of fashion, such as tactile and emotional values. Consumers are looking for out-of-the-box and surprising designs. There is a strong call for collaboration between humans and AI, as the forecasters' touch remains essential. The forecaster has the emotional intelligence to figure out what "bonds" the consumer to fashion, to determine the clients' attitude and adapt trend information to the brand image. Where the early days of fashion trend forecasting mainly revolved around product information, clients are now requesting culture-based information. This kind of information can be developed by adopting an empathetic, human-centric perspective that looks at social, environmental, and political issues. Big shifts in societal attitudes are hard for AI systems to address. The same holds for recognizing intricate style and design details. Data can produce a lot of noise and confusion, there is always going to be a need for people who have the intuition and knowledge to interpret that data. Fashion trend forecasters are the ones who can tell the narrative behind why things are shifting. The focus should thus be on how to best combine AI systems with the skills of fashion trend forecasters.

Reviewing the fashion trend forecasting industry from a historical perspective points towards the dominance of female fashion trend forecasters. Its origins can be traced back to gender stereotypes of the modern era. Gender stereotypes are preconceived social and cultural ideas that assign certain characteristics and roles to men and women. Prominent fashion trend forecasters such as Lidewij Edelkoort and Nelly Rodi have set the tone for the industry since the 1980s. Since then, not much has changed when it comes to gender balance in fashion trend forecasting. Trend forecasters are mostly female as they are expected to have profound experience in the fashion field and frequently enjoyed an educational background in design or marketing. The fashion industry is regarded as a feminized industry that thrives on gendered skills and attributes. Fashion trend forecasting has structures and practices in place that reinforce the traditional division of labor along gender lines. The large data-led trend forecasting agencies show how there is a gendered divide between the fashion and marketing teams on one side and the data teams on the other side. Moreover, the owners of large data-led trend agencies are often men. The nature of the fashion trend forecasting industry is subject to change due to technological advancements. Data-led fashion trend agencies demand a variety of different skill sets. Men have come into the industry and manifested themselves in the tech departments. Even though they are responsible for developing and checking up on AI systems, they have not become the actual trend forecasters. Underlying sociocultural factors, gender stereotypes, and implicit biases shape the access to symbolic and explicit resources that pose challenges to women wanting to go into AI teams. The main issue with excluding women from data teams in trend agencies is male developers can unconsciously insert their implicit biases into its creation. Both men and women are needed to extract meaning out of trend research and connect the dots from multiple viewpoints. Understanding data can be a difficult task, especially in the current landscape of information overload. It is therefore essential to keep an eye on the gender balance in traditional and data-led forecasting agencies. Fashion trend forecasting agencies are not consciously aware of the fact that having a non-gender-balanced workforce can have consequences for conducting trend research and attracting new talent. Mixing genders and collaborating between different teams can lead to better outcomes than working in silos. There is a strong business case for incorporating both genders in trend research as it can boost financial performance, increases the ability to attract talent, contributes to penetrating untapped markets and allows for connecting with a wider pool of clients. Observing the many different layers of society in the globalized world of fashion requires diverse teams who operate from different research areas and locations. Furthermore, attracting people who represent the talent and markets of the future, regardless of their gender, can bring unconventional ideas forward.

Notes

1 DuBreuil & Sheng, "Traditional vs. big-data fashion," 1–2.
2 Tucholke and Frohm, "The trend forecasting paradox," 8.
3 Perna, *Forecasting*.
4 Brannon, *Fashion Forecasting*.
5 Ibid., 9–13.
6 Smith, "Book Review of Fashion Forecasting."
7 Giertz-Mårtenson, *Looking into the Future*, 5.
8 Ibid., 221–224.
9 Quinn, *Fashion Futures*.
10 "Next: Bikinis That Stick."
11 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim. *Fashion trends*.
12 Lantz, *The trendmakers*.
13 Ibid, 154.
14 Adegeest, "The Dynamics of Trend Forecasting," 35.
15 Blaszczyk and Wubs, *The Fashion Forecasters*.
16 Ibid, 28.
17 Ibid.
18 Larsen, "Digital turn in fashion," 24.
19 DuBreuil & Sheng, "Traditional vs. big-data fashion," 1–10.
20 Blaszczyk, *Producing Fashion*, 1–2.
21 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim, *Fashion trends*, 20.
22 Ibid, 156.
23 De Wet, "Investigating Fashion Forecasting," 13.
24 Idacavage, "Copying French Couture."
25 Ballmer and Tobias, "Trend forecasting: collecting," 151–69. Pouillard and Trivette, "Tobé Coller Davis," 63–86.
26 Mackinney-Valentin, "Trends," 175–6.
27 Ibid., 176–177.
28 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim, *Fashion trends*, 49.
29 Blaszcyck and Wubs, *The Fashion Forecasters*, 28
30 De Wet, "Investigating Fashion Forecasting," 109.
31 Goncu-Berk, "Fashion Trends."
32 Tham, "Lucky people forecast," 107–8.
33 Ibid., 186.
34 Lopes, "The discourse of fashion change," 334.
35 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim, *Fashion trends*, 71.
36 Ibid, 347.
37 Lantz, *The trendmakers*, 31.
38 Tham, "Lucky people forecast," 142.
39 Blaszcyck and Wubs, *The Fashion Forecasters*, 27.
40 Molloy and Larne, "Who needs cultural intermediaries," 372–3.
41 Blaszcyck and Wubs, *The Fashion Forecasters*, 27.
42 Ruane, "Spreading the Word," 26–30.
43 Molloy and Larne, "Who needs cultural intermediaries," 372–3.
44 Ibid., 372–3.
45 Ruane, "Spreading the Word," 26–30.
46 Alan Turing Institute, "Women data."
47 Entwistle, "The Aesthetic Economy," 321–2.
48 Ibid., 131.
49 Lantz, *The trendmakers*, 38.
50 Cassidy, "Consumer Colour," 111.
51 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim, *Fashion trends*, 56.
52 Aaltonen and Barth, "How Do We Make," 45–6.
53 Entwistle, *The Aesthetic Economy of Fashion*, 135–7.
54 Gallate and Keen, "Intuition," 685–6.

55 Tham, "Lucky people forecast," 107–8.
56 Lantz, *The trendmakers*, 31.
57 De Wet, "Investigating Fashion Forecasting Approaches," 1.
58 Lantz, *The Trendmakers*, 22.
59 Blaszcyck and Wubs, *The Fashion Forecasters*, 24–5.
60 Lantz, *The trendmakers*, 4–5.
61 Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digital Media," 507–8.
62 "Is Fashion Ready"
63 Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digital Media," 507–8.
64 Eundeok, Fiore and Kim, *Fashion trends*, 57–8.
65 Ibid, 163.
66 Adegeest, "The Dynamics of Trend Forecasting," 6.
67 Lantz, *The Trendmakers*, 22.
68 "The rise of the AI-powered."
69 "Using Artificial Intelligence."
70 Shi et al., "The exploration of artificial," 3–5.
71 Larsen, "Digital turn in fashion, 25.
72 DuBreuil & Sheng, "Traditional vs. big-data fashion," 2.
73 Rickman and Cosenza, "The changing digital dynamics," 606–7.
74 DuBreuil & Sheng, "Traditional vs. big-data fashion," 3.
75 Larsen, "Digital turn in fashion," 62.
76 See appendix for list of interviewees.
77 Dahlström, "Colour forecasting and managerial implications," 22.
78 Vinken, *Fashion Zeitgeist*, 10–15.
79 Harvard Business Review, "Gender Initiatives Are Culture Change Initiatives."
80 Francke, "Create a gender-balanced workplace," 1–2.
81 Harvard Business Review, "Gender Balance Is Hard."

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Appendix 1. List of Interviewees

Name	*Role*	*Country*	*Interview date*	*Duration*
Anne Marie Commandeur	Director Stijlinstituut Amsterdam/Trend analyst	The Netherlands	April 6, 2021	71:02
Carrera Kurnik	Culture editor and consumer insights strategist at Fashion Snoops	United States	March 30, 2021	32:51
Dio Kurazawa	Co-founder at The Bear Scouts, Head of Sustainability, and Head of Denim at WGSN	The Netherlands	March 29, 2021	53:12
Geraldine Wharry	Founder and Managing Director at Geraldine Wharry—Trend Atelier	United Kingdom	May 11, 2021	35:47
Jan Agelink	Owner of Buro Jantrendman	The Netherlands	April 1, 2021	36:35
Maria Janssen	Creative Director at Humanoid, Trend Director at Amazon Fashion EU, Creative Director at WGSN	The Netherlands	April 1, 2021	53:26
Mélanie Mollard	Fashion Editor and PR Officer at Heuritech	France	March 24, 2021	36:55
Ornella Bignami	Creative Director at Elementi Moda	Italy	April 9, 2021	50:21
Rachel Lee	Senior Researcher at Stylus	United Kingdom	April 3, 2021	50:04
Vikas Raykar	Senior Technical Staff Member and Manager at IBM AI Research for Supply Chain	India	April 9, 2021	49:12
Volker Ketteniss	Menswear Director at WGSN	Germany	April 30, 2021	42:04
Willem Schenk	Lecturer-researcher Fashion and Branding at AMFI, Medior Designer Creative Office de Bijenkorf, Executive Assistant to Lidewij Edelkoort	The Netherlands	April 2, 2021	50:29

14 Fast Fashion

A Successful Business Model Forced to Transform

José Antonio Miranda and Alba Roldán

Since the end of the 1990s, the most dynamic fashion industry has been the so-called fast fashion industry. This business model has grown faster than the fashion industry as a whole and its market share has increased, driven by the international expansion of companies such as Spain's Inditex (the parent company of Zara), Sweden's H&M, Japan's Fast Retailing (Uniqlo), America's Gap, Ireland's Primark, and Britain's Topshop. While the global fashion industry as a whole grew at an average annual rate of 4.3% between 2000 and 2012,[1] the sales of Inditex and H&M, the two largest fast fashion retailers, increased in real values after discounting inflation, at a rate of over 10% in the same period.[2] Furthermore, fast fashion chains have enjoyed wider profit margins than traditional clothing brands, more than double on average, in the early years of the twenty-first century.[3] This success has placed these companies among the most well-known and respected international brands: In the ranking of the top global brands elaborated by the consulting firm Interbrand in 2019, Zara and H&M held positions 29 and 30, that is, among the five most highly valued fashion brands on the list, only behind Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Hermès.

This chapter analyzes the origin, characteristics, and evolution of fast fashion, as well as its high social and environmental costs. The main sources of information have been, in addition to the extensive literature on the subject, the economic, corporate governance, and sustainability reports of the largest fast fashion companies, the economic press, and specialized fashion magazines. The study first delves into the bases of the competitive advantage of fast fashion companies and shows how the development of social networks and electronic commerce is affecting this business model, with the appearance of "pure players" that are very competitive in price. The text then discusses the fundamental role played by offshoring and the establishment of agile supply chains. In the fourth section, the evolution of Inditex, the world's leading company in this type of fashion, is delved into. The following section reviews the social and environmental problems generated by fast fashion and the strategy applied by the main companies to reduce them. Finally, some brief conclusions are offered on the need to transform this business model.

A Successful Business Model

Although the term "fast fashion" is often used to refer to low-cost fashion, in reality, it is more specific. It refers to a business model characterized by the production of a wide variety of garments made very quickly, which are continuously renewed and whose designs follow the fashion trends at lower prices. Contrary to the traditional production-driven approach of the fashion industry, this business model adopts a market-driven

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approach.[4] The majority of the retailers do not have their own production structure, but they design and market the product, outsourcing the production to independent companies located in countries with low labor costs. Even retailers with their own production structure, such as Inditex and Benetton,[5] outsource the production of the majority of their garments to external companies.

Although the majority of the characteristics of fast fashion are not original and dated back several decades, these features developed as a unique combination from the 1980s, giving rise to a differentiated competition model. Offshoring and the increasing dominance of the large retailers led to fierce price competition in the mass consumption market, driving some companies to develop a new strategy.[6] Until then, the supply of the large retailers had been mainly composed of basic garments that were little sensitive to the changes in fashion trends. The transportation times from the producing countries were long and the most common strategy consisted in producing large quantities of standardized garments at the lowest possible price.[7] In order to increase their competitiveness, some retailers began to promote their own brands, extend their product range with fashion articles and accelerate their capacity to respond to changes in demand. These strategies, which based competitiveness not only on price, but also design, were well received by consumers who were becoming increasingly more fashion-conscious and were widespread among apparel retailers from the 1990s.[8] The intensification of this form of competing gave rise to the birth of fast fashion. According to some authors, such as Bhardwaj and Fairhurst or Gupta and Centry,[9] this new business model of fashion originated in the United Kingdom, with retailers such as New Look or George, but, in reality, we can observe a similar evolution of companies of other countries, such as Sweden's H&M, Spain's Inditex, or America's Forever 21, at least since the 1980s.

The capacity to create and market new products in very short periods of time enables companies to adapt their supply to fashion trends and reduce the risk of manufacturing garments for which there is no market. In the traditional model of the fashion industry which predominated until the 1990s, production was adapted to two seasons, spring/summer and autumn/winter. The spring/summer collection reached the stores at the beginning of the year, while that of the autumn/winter arrived after the summer. The production of the garments for both seasons began at least six months in advance.[10] It was a business model in which the designer proposed a collection of garments which could be well-received by consumers or which could not match demand, obliging the retailers to make considerable price reductions and risk being left with many unsold garments. The fast fashion companies, on the contrary, have extraordinarily short production cycles, designing, manufacturing, and distributing the garments in only a few weeks, which enables them to delay the beginning of the process and identify the fashion trends shortly before their garments reach the market. In this way, the tastes and purchases of the consumers determine the design of the garments. This model helps to better adapt the supply to the demand, reducing the need to make discounts and, therefore, fast fashion firms obtain a greater sales margin.[11]

The risk of products not adapting to the demand or becoming obsolete is also reduced because instead of offering large volumes of the same garment, limited quantities of each article are produced and a wide range of different garments are launched. The flow of new goods is maintained throughout the year, regardless of the traditional seasons. The time that the products are on the market, that is, the life cycle of the product, is usually very short, only a few weeks.[12] This strategy causes consumers to perceive scarcity, which dissuades them from deferring the purchase until the sales. Therefore, they buy a product that may sell out quickly and has a sufficiently low price so as to be bought immediately.

Another distinctive feature of the fast fashion chains is the design concept. Instead of making a proposal of an original style, the design teams of these chains are inspired by the trends observed on the catwalks, fashion magazines, social networks, opinion leaders, and the information that they receive from the stores.[13] The capacity to create garments in line with the dominant fashion trend at affordable prices that attract the consumer is an essential element for the competitiveness and profitability of the companies.

Cheap Yet Attractive Fashion, Increasingly More Internet-Based

The low prices and the continuous flow of the novelties of fast fashion have contributed to changing fashion consumption habits, increasing the amount of articles purchased per person and the frequency of the purchases. In the European Union, the number of garments purchased annually per inhabitant increased by 40% between 1996 and 2012. In the same period, clothes prices grew only by an average of 3%, while those of consumer goods, in general, grew by 60%. The low prices have also given rise to a reduction in the useful life of garments, which have become to be regarded as perishable goods and are frequently thrown away after just a few uses.[14]

In reality, fast fashion has accentuated a social phenomenon that already existed and which was one of the causes fostering this business model. From the 1990s, the sociocultural changes accelerated the pace of life and intensified the use of consumption as a way to express personal identity, arousing greater interest in fashion among consumers.[15] The increase in the number of people informed about fashion was initially fueled by the greater attention that the media paid to the sector and, from the beginning of the twenty-first century, the rapid flow of information about fashion trends provided in social networks. The demand for a more varied and affordable fashion has affected all generations but has been mainly driven by young consumers, whose continually evolving identity leads them to frequently renew their image while they usually have a low purchasing power.[16] The low prices of clothing enable consumers to make many purchases, providing immediate satisfaction, without the fear of making the wrong choices. Fast fashion consumers are willing to renounce quality and durability in exchange for the power to frequently renew their wardrobe with garments that follow the latest trends.

However, despite offering cheap garments aimed at a mass market, the principal fast fashion brands have developed marketing strategies to improve their image and spotlight the fashion content of their products. This is the reason why they have large, elegant stores with carefully dressed windows in the main shopping streets of the cities, beside the luxury brands. Some fast fashion companies also make strong investments in advertising, using the image of top models and celebrities and collaborating with haute couture designers. Along these lines, since 2004, H&M has launched an annual special collection in collaboration with prestigious designers, such as Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, and Gianni Versace.[17] Furthermore, some fast fashion companies have participated with clothes of their own design teams in major fashion shows. The pioneer was Topshop, which began to show its "Unique" collection in the London Fashion Week in 2005,[18] but H&M has also appeared on the catwalk on several occasions in the Paris Fashion Week. Gap has done the same in the Mercedes Benz Fashion Week of New York and Mango and Desigual have appeared in 080 Barcelona Fashion.[19]

The hallmark of prestige achieved by fast fashion brands has gradually broadened the spectrum of their consumers, including people of all ages and purchasing power. On the other hand, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, when fashion magazines began to advise against dressing in just one brand, the trend to mix luxury articles with low-cost fast fashion garments has become widespread.[20] This process of "democratizing fashion" has been fueled by public figures with a high social influence, such as Michelle Obama, Queen Letizia of Spain, and the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton, who have appeared in the media dressed in brands such as Zara, H&M, and Topshop.

Over the last decade, the fashion sector as a whole, and particularly the fast fashion segment have been strongly influenced by the development of social networks and e-commerce. The growing use of social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram, and the repercussion that influencers have through these networks has generated new ways of influencing consumers and creating trends. The greater ease and speed of producing information and accessing it has accelerated the pace of the changes in fashion. The phenomenon particularly affects those born after 1980, who are the principal consumers of fast fashion. Therefore, the companies of this business model have implemented an active communication strategy through the Internet. In 2018, Zara had 24.9 million followers on Instagram, H&M had 24.7 million, and the British brand Forever 21 had 14.5 million.[21] Social networks and websites have become the new shop windows for fast fashion brands, where they can advertise their new collections and promotions while maintaining continuous contact with millions of consumers and receive information about them.[22]

The impact of the new information technologies on fashion has been amplified by the exponential growth of e-commerce, which is shaking up the marketing and the management strategies of the companies. In 2018, a total of 28% of global fashion purchases were made online and the difficulties for personal contact created by the COVID-19 pandemic gave a strong boost to e-commerce since 2020. Some of the large global fast fashion retailers, such as H&M and Gap, introduced online sales early on, although they took a long time to develop them. H&M, which had extensive experience in mail-order sales, began online sales in Sweden in 1998. A few years later, it extended this channel to the rest of the Scandinavian countries and from 2004, it gradually introduced it into other European countries. In 2010, it only sold through the Internet in eight countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands, Austria, and the United Kingdom), but from then it accelerated the expansion of its online activity; in 2015, it had online operations in 23 countries and in 2018 in 47. Gap also began to operate an online sales channel for some of its brands in the United States in 1997–1998 and, although until 2006 it only operated online in its national market, by 2010 it had extended e-commerce to almost 90 countries. Inditex incorporated this new sales channel into its business much later, but developed it quickly. The Spanish company did not begin online sales until 2007, when it implemented it for its brand Zara Home. In 2010, it launched its online channel for Zara in 16 European countries and the following year it extended it to more countries in Europe, the United States, and Japan and incorporated the rest of the group's chains. In 2015, the products of Inditex could be purchased online in 29 countries and in 2018 in more than 200.[23] With the fast growth of online sales, the fast fashion companies have made large investments in technological infrastructures and digitalization and in new logistics centers and systems in order to ensure the fast management of many orders of a few articles in a global market. The most widespread strategy is that of the omnichannel. That is, the joint and coordinated management of sales in physical stores and online channels.[24]

The boom in e-commerce has modified and reduced the fundamental role played by stores in the fast fashion business from the outset. It is no longer essential to expand the network of stores to reach new consumers and, in fact, in recent years, the leading chains have hardly increased the number of stores and have even reduced them with the impact of COVID-19. Furthermore, online sales and social networks provide detailed information about the tastes of consumers which previously could only be obtained through the stores. These changes have led to the emergence of new competitors, which are growing fast. These are low-cost fashion companies, such as Britain's Boohoo, which only operates online and which is able to place garments on the market in even shorter periods than the most efficient fast fashion retailers.

The Location of the Supply Chains

The low prices of fast fashion articles are possible thanks to the use of low quality materials and, principally, their manufacture in countries with low labor costs, as labor can represent between 30% and 50% of production costs.[25] Although to ensure very short times in providing garments with a high fashion component, companies are manufacturing in locations that are relatively close to the market, the main criterion for locating production is the cost of labor. As such, even when companies seek to produce in locations closer to the market, they do so in places with low wages. The displacement of the clothing industry to developing countries was not initiated by fast fashion firms, but has been an essential element for their growth, based on a global sourcing strategy.[26]

This displacement began in the 1950s, with the rapid growth in Europe and the United States of imports of textiles and clothing from Japan. Since then, while most of the main retailers and international brands continued to be based in developed countries, the participation of developing countries in the production of this industry did not stop increasing, at a rate greatly influenced at each stage by changes in the regulation of international trade. These changes and the evolution of labor costs in the different countries gave rise to successive shifts in the location of the industry.[27] In the 1970s and early 1980s, the leading role passed to South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, which opened their industries to foreign investment and specialized in exports.[28] Faced with growing competition, developed countries established measures to protect their production and these measures were intensified and generalized since 1974 with the signing of the International Multifiber Agreement (MFA) within the GATT. The agreement assigned quotas to developing countries that limited the export of these products to Europe and the United States. These quotas strongly conditioned the location of production, which was moving in search of countries with available quota.[29] Despite protectionist measures, foreign competition forced the garment industry in developed countries to react by incorporating technology and new business management methods to increase productivity. Companies also specialized in higher-quality and fashionable products, moving the most labor-intensive activities to countries with low labor costs, both through direct investment and by subcontracting with local companies. The clothing store chains, with a growing share of the European and North American markets, joined the offshoring. As a result, the production of the clothing industry decreased by 20% in the European Community between 1973 and 1992. The sector continued to grow in the United States during the 1980s, but began a rapid decline in the

1990s, so that imports of clothing represented in value more than 70% of the country's consumption at the end of the twentieth century.[30]

Since the end of the 1980s, the development achieved by the so-called Asian dragons caused them to reduce their clothing production and this industry moved to other countries in the area with lower wages, such as China, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. The production capacity of these countries gave a new impetus to the relocation of the sector to Asia. In the mid-1990s, a new wave of industry expansion began in other countries with even lower costs, such as Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, and Vietnam. At that time, the Agreement on Clothing and Textiles reached in the Uruguay Round of the GATT established a transitory period of 10 years for the gradual elimination of the quota system for textile exports from developing countries, although most of the limits to exports remained in force until the end of 2004. The liberalization of international trade in this type of goods in 2005 was moderated until 2008 by the imposition of voluntary restrictions on the export of large Asian producers in the main markets, due to fears of a collapse of the sector in developed economies. However, these restrictions did not prevent producers in emerging countries from enjoying a new export boom, led mainly by China and, to a much lesser extent, by Bangladesh and Vietnam.[31]

The removal of barriers to international trade and the continued incorporation into production of countries with very low labor costs has fueled the rapid growth of fast fashion companies since the end of the twentieth century. China has so far remained the world's leading supplier of fast fashion companies, even though its wages are already significantly higher than those in other Asian countries and not much lower than salaries in competing southern Mediterranean countries. Its competitive advantage is based largely on the economies of scale and the efficiency of its large companies and specialized clusters, the support of the State, good infrastructure, and low transport costs.[32]

The capacity to create and place new products on the market extraordinarily quickly, the so-called "quick response," is an essential component of the competitiveness of fast fashion companies. Not all companies have developed it to the same extent or with the same strategies, but they have certain common elements. A first overall feature is the use of information technologies to monitor the evolution of sales and the available stock and to immediately communicate it to the production and distribution centers. Also common is the use of technological advances to facilitate the design of garments and the adaptation of the designs to forms and materials that make their manufacture easier.[33] The large investment in highly automated and efficient logistics systems is another common feature of these companies, which enables them to receive and distribute the goods quickly.[34] However, the most decisive element for the quick response is an agile supply chain, which is able to produce even small orders with speed, flexibility, and at a low cost.[35]

In reality, fast fashion companies combine different supply strategies, because not all garments need to reach the market at the same speed. Basic garments that are repeated each season with small variations are ordered much more in advance in distant countries, in accordance with their low costs. The products that seek to follow the latest trends are those to which the quick response strategy is applied in order to ensure very short times between the creation of the product and its sale in the stores. For these products manufacturing companies located closer to the market are preferred. While the production of basic garments is mainly outsourced to Asian producers, the fashion garments are usually manufactured according to a just-in-time strategy in countries closer to the market with good logistics and transport services. The main nearby supply chains are in

Turkey, Morocco, and Portugal for European companies, and in Mexico and the Caribbean countries for U.S. companies.[36] The production closer to the market is carried out with higher wages than that outsourced to Asia, and therefore, it has significantly higher costs for retailers. The price of a pair of jeans manufactured in Turkey, for example, can be three times that of the same garment manufactured in Bangladesh.[37] However, these higher costs can be compensated in different ways: With higher sales prices of the articles, thanks to the value added by fashion; with lower transport and inventory costs; and with a lesser need for discounts and sales thanks to the reduction of uncertainty with respect to the demand due to a closer period of time between the design and sale.[38]

Inditex, the Leader of Fast Fashion

Of the large fast fashion retailers, Inditex has had the most spectacular growth since the 1990s, positioning it as the largest clothes retailer in the world. It is also the company that has developed this business model the earliest and most profoundly and has constituted a benchmark for the sector as a whole. Inditex began as a small family dressmaking workshop created by Amancio Ortega and his siblings at the beginning of the 1960s in A Coruña, a medium-sized city in northeast Spain, in the region of Galicia, very close to Portugal. The small workshop grew and gave rise to the creation of several companies dedicated to textile production and dressmaking. It integrated retail sales from 1975, when the chain of Zara stores was created, first established in the city of A Coruña and then the rest of the region. From the beginning of the 1980s, it opened stores in the principal shopping streets throughout Spain. The expansion of the initially small group of companies was based on the increase in the production capacity through the sub-contracting of the sewing tasks to independent workshops and cooperatives made up of women from the region and northern Portugal.[39]

In 1985, Industria de Diseño Textil SA (Inditex) was created as a parent company of a group of seven clothing firms, with 41 stores distributed across Spain and more than a thousand workers. Under the direction of Amancio Ortega, the group began to penetrate external markets at the end of the 1980s, with the establishment of stores in Portugal, the United States, and France. The internationalization process accelerated from the mid-1990s: In 1995, the group had stores in nine different countries and sales outside of Spain represented 30% of total turnover. In the year 2000, these figures had increased to 32 countries and 52%, in 2010 to 77 countries and 72% and in 2019 sales through stores and e-commerce had extended to 202 countries and the turnover outside of Spain accounted for more than 83% of the total. This international expansion obliged the company to resort to borrowing in the 1990s, but from the middle of that decade the financial debt rapidly decreased and Inditex financed its growth mainly through the reinvestment of profits.[40]

From the 1990s, Inditex began to create new chains of stores to target different segments of demand, although Zara, the most popular brand of clothing for women, men, and children, has remained the principal chain, concentrating around 70% of sales and profits. The growth of the group was particularly fast at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century and maintained a very high pace until 2007. Turnover increased from 863 million euros in 1995 to almost 4,000 million in 2002, an average annual increase of almost 21% in real terms. This growth was based on the multiplication of the number of stores, which increased from 508 to 1,558 between these two dates. The expansion was concentrated in Europe, where, in 2002, 80% of sales were made and almost 85% of the stores were located. At that time, the principal market was Spain, which provided almost half of total turnover. Between 2002 and 2007, the number of garments sold by Inditex almost tripled, exceeding 627 million, and the value of sales in real terms increased at an annual rate of over 15%.[41] The penetration of international markets was boosted by the flotation of Inditex in May 2001. The rapid appreciation of the shares converted the group into the eighth Spanish company in terms of its stock value leading it to form part of the Ibex 35, the principal reference index of the Spanish stock exchange.[42]

The expansion of sales lost vigor with the financial crisis of 2008 and in the whole period of 2007–2019, the real average growth rate of turnover fell to 8% per year. Profitability also reduced slightly from 2013: The gross sales margin, which had grown from 50.5% in 2000 to 59.8% in 2012 decreased in the following years to stand at 55.9% in 2019. The nominal value of the company's shares multiplied by five between 2008 and 2013, placing Inditex as the leading company of the Spanish stock exchange in terms of stock value and led the company to undertake a stock split in 2014, dividing each of them into five, without modifying its capital. The shares continued to appreciate in the following years at a slower pace and with highs and lows, in line with the sales of the company and exchange rates, reaching their highest point in May 2017, when the nominal value with which they had been listed on the stock market 16 years earlier had increased 12-fold.[43]

In this last phase, the Asian markets were the most dynamic, followed by the American markets. During 2019, Inditex sold almost 1,600 million garments and its turnover exceeded 28,000 million euros. More than 60% of its income came from Europe, but less than 16% from Spain, almost 16% from America, and over 22% from Asia and the rest of the world. In this year, 2019, Inditex was made up of around 400 companies, the majority wholly owned by the group. Of these, more than three-quarters were engaged in retail sales in the countries where the group operated. The different chains together had a total of almost 7,500 stores distributed across 95 countries. Of these, the largest group belonged to Zara (2,142 stores). Spain was the country with the highest number of points of sale of all the chains (with 1,580 establishments), followed by China (609), Russia (558), Mexico (438), and in the European Union, Italy (384), Portugal (334), and France (284).[44]

From its beginnings, Inditex has stood out for the flexibility in its production and the speed with which it adapts to the demand of the market, faster than other fast fashion companies. The group is able to create new garments, place them in its stores in just five weeks and replenish garments that have sold out in two weeks. These characteristics have enabled it to have lower inventory costs and a much lower proportion of products on sale and unsold articles than its competitors.[45] In accordance with the information provided by *The Economist,* Zara had an inventories-to-sales ratio of 7 in the year 2000, while H&M had a ratio of 12 and Gap 14.[46] Back then, Zara was able to obtain 85% of the complete price of the clothes that it sold, while the average for the sector was between 60% and 70%.[47] The higher profitability of Inditex with respect to its competitors has heightened in recent years: While the Spanish group obtained an average operating margin of almost 23% in the five-year period from 2015 to 2019, H&M did not reach 11%.[48]

The flexibility and speed of Inditex has been supported by the group's vertical integration, as, contrary to the majority of other large retailers, Inditex does not only design and market its clothing but also has its own highly automated industrial structure dedicated to the most capital intensive and value added phases of the production process.[49] This productive fabric reinforces its quick response strategy, as it saves time in transport and negotiation with suppliers. The rapid adaptation to demand has also been achieved through outsourcing the production of garments with a more fashionable design to companies and cooperatives located nearby, principally in Galicia and the north of Portugal. Both regions are among the Western European regions with the lowest labor costs, while having a workforce trained to work in the garment industry and where informal labor could initially be used.[50]

Until the end of the twentieth century, the production in the facilities of the group accounted for around half of the garments sold, employing almost a quarter of the hundred companies making up Inditex and almost 11% of the group's workers. Then, 80% of the garments were produced nearby, within Europe. However, Inditex has gradually been reducing the importance of its own manufacturing activities and has been increasingly resorting to more distant suppliers with lower labor costs. The production carried out nearby has been transferred from Spain and Portugal to Morocco and Turkey, and the percentage of garments produced in Asia has not stopped growing. In 2007, only 6% of the group's companies and 1% of its workers were dedicated to manufacturing, while production nearby, including Morocco and other places in Europe and the Mediterranean area, did not exceed 49%. In 2019, the percentage of the group's companies dedicated to manufacturing was even lower (2.5%), and the number of workers employed in this activity was half of that 20 years before, representing less than 1% of total employment. In 2019, the company did not provide information about the geographical origin of its articles, but the data on the suppliers used suggest a very small participation of Spain and Portugal and a high dependency on Asia.[51]

Excellent planning and an extraordinary logistical organization have enabled Inditex to continue carrying out its production with very short lead times and to offer a high proportion of articles in line with the latest fashion trends using a global network of suppliers which reduces costs. This is another of the features that differentiates Inditex and make its brands more attractive to consumers: The effort that it makes to follow the latest trends and manufacture a large proportion of articles influenced by these trends, although they are slightly more expensive than the products of its competitors. Not all of the Inditex chains are equally sensitive to fashion, but at Zara, the group's flagship chain, this sensitivity is an essential characteristic. By the end of the 1990s, more than 80% of garments of the Zara brand were articles with a high fashion content. Currently, this proportion has decreased to around 60%, but it is still a high percentage, which decisively contributes to the competitive advantage of this brand. This type of article represents less than 30% of the product range of its biggest competitor today, namely H&M.[52]

Inditex also performs better than its competitors in the capacity to offer a wide variety of different garments each year. At the end of the twentieth century, Zara created more than 10,000 different articles per year, while its principal rivals did not exceed 4,000.[53] Furthermore, not all of the novelties are introduced at the beginning of the season. More than half of the articles are placed on the market throughout the year, as the stores receive new garments adapted to local demand twice a week and modify their window displays every 15 days. This constant renovation of articles encourages the customers to buy more frequently. Thus, while customers visit traditional clothes shops in central London on average four times a year, they visit Zara stores 17 times in the same period.[54]

The logistics system of Inditex enables the orders to be served to the stores in less than 36 hours in Europe and less than 48 in Asia and America. Until 2019, the reception and distribution of the products, irrespective of where they had been manufactured, was centralized in Spain, in the ten logistics centers that the company has in different cities, close to the head offices of its eight principal brands. Strong investments have been made in these centers. They are highly automated and in some cases are run with software developed by the company itself. In 2020, it took a first step towards a greater internationalization of the logistics system, beginning to operate another large distribution center in the Netherlands, in the town of Lelystad, with a strategic position close to Schiphol Airport, one of the world's principal airports due to its intercontinental connections and Rotterdam, the largest goods port in Europe. These large distribution hubs are complemented with other smaller centers and 19 warehouses for online sales distributed across the whole world.[55]

Inditex's competitive advantage is also based on adapting its products to the tastes and needs of consumers. To do this it has a large number of designers who permanently receive information from the stores and online sales channel through the Product Management department and are integrated within the sales teams in the head offices of the different chains. The efficient mechanisms established by the company for researching the market and converting this knowledge into attractive and profitable products have been one of the bases of the company's success since the outset.[56] On the other hand, Inditex has traditionally spent much less than its competitors on advertising. In 2008, Tokatli calculated that Zara's investment in advertising was less than 0.3% of its income, while its competitors invested between 3% and 4%.[57]

Inditex's strategy to foster sales has fundamentally been based on the stores. The company has established its stores in the best shopping streets with attractive window displays and an elegant and sober decoration to present the clothes as if they were high-quality garments, imitating the high-level brands. However, the development of electronic sales is modifying this strategy. Since 2011, the pace of opening of new points of sale has continuously decreased. In 2019, there was a net reduction in the number of stores and in 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Inditex closed 640 of its stores around the world. Instead, Inditex has intensified its relationship with its customers through the websites of its brands and social networks. The websites of the group's eight brands received more than 4,300 million visits in 2019 and in the same year, the number of followers of these brands on social networks was almost 180 million.[58]

The Social and Environmental Cost of Fast Fashion

Fast fashion has been harshly criticized for promoting an unsustainable consumption model, with a very high ecological cost and a production based on the exploitation of workers in developing countries.[59] On the one hand, this criticism highlights that the cheapness of the clothes is only possible thanks to the use of poorly paid workers with terrible working conditions.[60] The social problem came to light after the accident suffered in the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh in 2013. In this factory complex, which was in a dilapidated condition, there were almost 5,000 operators, mostly women, sewing for local contractors who supplied the large international retailers. Its collapse caused the death of more than 1,000 people and significantly damaged the image of the low-cost clothing brands.[61]

On the other hand, the criticism of fast fashion also indicates that the low price and poor quality of the products promotes a culture of wastefulness, whereby garments are used just a few times and generate a significant waste problem, with more than 90 million tons of textile products accumulated in landfills or burned each year.[62] Furthermore, the obtaining of raw materials and their transformation in the textile industry implies an enormous consumption of water and the use of large amounts of chemical products that are harmful for the health and the environment.[63] It is calculated that the fashion industry uses 79 trillion liters of water per year and generates around 20% of the industrial pollution of this basic resource.[64] In order to produce a simple pair of jeans, for example, more than 3,600 liters of water and 3 kilos of chemical products are used.[65] To all of this, we should add that the production and distribution of clothes is one of the activities that generates most greenhouse gases, accounting for at least 8% of total CO_2 emissions.[66] There has been a growing concern about these issues since the end of the 1990s.

There are differing opinions regarding the extent to which the social and environmental cost of clothes really influences the purchasing decision of consumers. While some studies indicate that ethical criteria hardly condition demand[67] and attribute a greater influence to the awareness of the ecological problems and the well-being of animals than a concern for labor exploitation,[68] other studies claim the opposite: That both issues seem to be a powerful determinant of consumer behavior,[69] particularly the social problem.[70] It is probably necessary to analyze much wider samples of consumers in order to obtain clearer results. In any event, the population is increasingly keen for companies to act in a sustainable way. Therefore, the influence of this ethical criterion on consumer decision, if it is still not strong, will be so in the future.[71]

The leading fast fashion retailers have been aware of the need to protect the reputation of their brands from the negative image that their association with labor exploitation and the deterioration of the environment could cause. Consequently, since the end of the twentieth century, they have been implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies to reduce the negative impact of their activity and seek economic, social, and environmental sustainability. These measures have become a fundamental component of their marketing strategy. H&M was one of the first companies to act along these lines,[72] when, in 1997, it published its Code of Conduct to regulate the situation of the workers in the supplier companies and began to carry out inspections in them the following year. In 2000, the Swedish company joined Global Responsibility, an online communication platform to foster the transparency of companies in issues related to their sustainability. Its Annual Report of that year included a section on the measures to diminish the environmental impact, and in the 2001 Report it also introduced a section on the company's social policy. In the same year, H&M supported the United Nations initiative The Global Compact, to encourage the social responsibility of companies and from 2002, it began to publish an annual Corporate Social Responsibility Report, indicating the proposals and measures of the company to advance in sustainability.[73] Gap and Inditex followed a very similar path a little later.[74]

On an environmental level, the principal measures implemented—and widely publicized—by the fast fashion companies have sought, first of all, to gradually increase the use of sustainable materials, such as organic cotton and recycled fibres. These measures have been accompanied by the collaboration with organizations engaged in fostering the sustainability of crops, such as Better Cotton Initiative and Organic Cotton Accelerator. They have also supported research in new recycling technologies and have invested in start-ups that produce recycled fibers, such as Worn Again, Renewcell, and Lenzing. A second line of action has been the reduction in the use of dangerous and polluting chemical products, in accordance with the guidelines of the organization Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC). Other common policies have been the reduction in the consumption of energy, the reduction of CO2 emissions and the promotion of renewable energies. In their annual reports, the companies also highlight the lower use of plastics and the promotion of reusable and recyclable packaging. Finally, another widespread action has been the implementation of systems for collecting used garments to be reused, recycled into new textile products or to be used to produce energy. Some companies have even tested the creation of new business models, such as the sale of used clothes and the repair or hire of clothes. Again, H&M has been one of the most innovative companies in this field; since 2015, it has increased its participation in Sellpy, an online sales platform of second-hand clothes, of which it is currently the majority owner; in 2017, it launched a new chain, ARKET, engaged in functional and timeless clothing, intended for long duration; in 2018, in some stores, it installed a Take Care section to provide customers with everything necessary to repair, renew, and take care of their clothes, and since then it has also tested different clothes hire formats.[75]

On a socio-labor level, the action of large retailers has focused on introducing transparency in their supply chain and collaborating with unions, governments, and international institutions to improve the situation of their workers and those of their suppliers. The principal objectives have been to guarantee the health and safety of the workers, promote social dialogue, support dignified wages, promote better opportunities for women, and cooperate in the protection of migrants and refugees. In order to advance these objectives, social audits are regularly conducted of the supplier companies and corrective measures are applied depending on the results. The audits are carried out both by employees of fast fashion companies and by external consultants. For example, Inditex carried out almost 6,500 social audits in 2019, applying a methodology that was designed by the International Federation of Textile Unions, the Northumbria University, and the Center for Business and Public Sector Ethics of the University of Cambridge. Close to 94% of these audits were external and almost half of the total were carried out in Asia.[76] The fast fashion companies also finance humanitarian aid programs, collaborating with organizations such as Unicef, Médecins sans Frontières, Red Cross…[77]

Both the social measures and those of environmental protection are subject to evaluation and monitoring by independent organizations. In their sustainability reports, the companies reveal a significant advance in many indicators and several of them have obtained recognition for their progress in this field. Inditex, H&M, and Gap, for example, were included with good evaluations in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and the Ethical Fashion Report for 2019.[78] However, poor working conditions and situations of exploitation continue to be reported in the factories that produce for the large fast fashion retailers and they are accused of implementing ineffective environmental measures and of primarily seeking to improve the brand image instead of truly resolving the negative impact of their activity.[79]

Conclusions

Fast fashion has been the most successful business model in the fashion from the vantage point of economic results sector since the end of the twentieth century. Its development has been driven by the changes in consumption patterns of a wide group of the population, which has wanted to introduce fashion trends in its everyday way of dressing and to enjoy a greater variety of garments. The expansion of social networks and new information technologies, in general, have also strongly influenced its development. They have facilitated the diffusion of the fashion trends, accelerated their change and diversified their origin. On the other hand, fast fashion has been possible thanks to the process of globalization and the liberalization of international trade, which has enabled production to be located where the costs are lowest and has facilitated the constitution of global companies, able to sell in the five continents. The low prices of the articles are an essential requisite for the mass consumption that characterizes this business model and this can only be achieved through production in countries with very low labor costs. The connection between the different phases of the value chain of the products, sometimes located in very distant countries, and with the consuming markets, distributed throughout the whole world, has also been based on the progress of information technologies and the establishment of highly advanced and efficient logistics systems.

The success of fast fashion has not only led to the formation of large global companies with this business model, but has influenced the fashion industry as a whole, including the luxury brands. Fast fashion has been the dominant model over the last decades and its principal features have been imitated by both the new types of company in the fashion sector, engaged exclusively in online sales, and also by the traditional apparel retailers. Due to the influence of fast fashion, the brands that had still not outsourced their production to other countries began to do so, even the luxury brands. Some of the latter have created subbrands, with more reasonable prices, whose products are manufactured in low cost countries, seeking to broaden the spectrum of their consumers. Department stores have incorporated fast fashion brands in their supply and paying more attention to the fashion trends at all times has become widespread practice in the sector with the shortening of production times and the introduction of new articles mid-season or increasing the number of seasons, as well as improving the information and logistics systems.

Companies such as Inditex and H&M have democratized fashion, but this has multiplied consumption and production, accentuating the negative impact on the environment of the textile and clothing industry. The growing concern of public opinion and governments about this problem and the exploitation of workers has led these companies to implement strategies to reduce their environmental impact, improve the situation of the workers in their supply chain and advance toward a sustainable production model. The available data seem to confirm a significant effort by these companies to reduce the harmful effects of their activity. However, can fast fashion truly be sustainable? The principal problem is that this business model implies an extraordinarily high consumption of products that are rapidly discarded, which leads to an exhaustion of natural resources and strongly increases pollution and the accumulation of waste. The measures taken by the companies to reduce their environmental impact, which also forms part of their marketing strategy, cannot completely resolve the problem, as they have a contradictory effect: On the one hand, they moderate the negative impact of each article produced but, on the other hand, they contribute to promoting the brands and their products, to maintaining the growth of consumption and production and, therefore, the harm caused to the environment continues to grow. In order to make real progress towards a sustainable business model it would be necessary to moderate consumption, reduce production and lengthen the useful life of the products. In other words, it would be necessary to abandon the fast fashion model. The conclusion is similar when reflecting on the social problem and effectiveness of the measures taken by the retailers in this field. In order to really improve the living conditions of the workers of the supply chain it would be necessary to substantially increase wages. This would mean that the low prices of the final products could not be maintained, which is another of the essential characteristics of fast fashion.[80]

In response to the problems arising from this business model, the "slow fashion" proposal has recently been developed, inspired by the "slow food" movement which began in Italy in the 1980s. Slow fashion proposes a different way of consuming and producing fashion, in which the quality and longevity of the products are promoted, with timeless garments, attempting to minimize the ecological impact and generation of waste, and a socially responsible position is adopted, including the payment of fair wages to workers. It is a proposal of sustainable economic activity, guided by ethical principles, which seek circularity and imply the considerable modification of consumption patterns.[81] Its mass implementation is not easy, as it involves the renouncement of frequent changes in the design of products, which are the very essence of fashion, and increasing the price of garments, reverting the democratization process of this type of consumption. However, its proposals mark a valid path toward overcoming the threat of unsustainability faced by the sector. Paradoxically, large global retailers have not only taken measures inspired by some of the principles defending slow fashion, but are also testing business models that constitute an alternative to fast fashion. These companies, therefore, are prepared both to prolong in time the fast fashion model and to develop other more sustainable and socially responsible forms of business. The direction and pace of their evolution will be determined by the attitude of the consumers, and the behavior of demand, which these companies have shown to be able to interpret correctly.

Another pending challenge for fast fashion companies, and one which is probably more immediate than sustainability, is their adaptation to the digital economy. Until now, their growth had been based on the extension of the store network: The larger this network, the larger the potential market, the greater the awareness of the brand among consumers and the greater the possibilities of obtaining economies of scale and information about the tastes and trends of the demand. The development of e-commerce has created a different scenario, in which consumers can be reached and a lot of information can be obtained about them without the need for physical stores. This has given rise to the emergence of new competitors, fashion companies that only operate online and which, without the fixed costs of the store network, can be highly competitive in terms of price. The participation of e-commerce on total fashion sales has grown rapidly in recent years and it is predicted that it will continue growing at the same pace.[82] Therefore, the near future of large fast fashion retailers seems to be highly connected to their adaptation to online sales and their capacity to combine the different sales channels.[83]

Notes

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4 Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, "Fast Fashion: Response to Changes," 169.
5 Favero, *Benetton: I Colori Del Successo*; Crestanello and Tattara, "A Global Network and Its Local Ties."
6 Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, "Fast Fashioning the Supply Chain," 259–71.
7 Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, "Fast Fashion: Response to Changes," 166.
8 MacCarthy and Jayarathne, "Fast Fashion: Achieving Global Quick Response," 43.
9 Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, "Fast Fashion: Response to Changes," 169; Gupta and Gentry, "Evaluating Fast Fashion," 73.
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13 Taplin, "Global Commodity Chains and Fast Fashion," June 2014, 248.
14 Brydges, "Closing the Loop on Take, Make, Waste," 1.
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18 Sarah Mower, "Topshop Unique Spring 2006 Ready-to-Wear," *Vogue*, September 18, 2005, https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2006-ready-to-wear/topshop-unique#review.
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21 Buzzo and Abreu, *Fast Fashion, Fashion Brands & Consumption*, 5–6.
22 Gamboa and Gonçalves, "Customer Loyalty through Social Networks," 711.
23 *H&M Annual Report 2000*, 19; *2005*, 21; *2006*, 8; *2010,* 15; *2015,* 14; *2018,* 6–7; *SEC Form 10-K405 Gap Inc 2000*, 2–3; *Gap Inc. Annual Report 2006*, 5; *2010*, 4–5; *Inditex Annual Report 2007*, 29; *2010,* 23; *2015,* 2; *2018*, 52.
24 On the concept of omnichannel retailing, see for example Hickman et al., "An omnichannel approach to retailing," and Lynch and Liz Barnes. "Omnichannel fashion retailing."
25 Lin et al., "Dimensions of Apparel Manufacturing Strategy," 46.
26 H&M, for example, distributed clothing produced in their countries and in other European countries in a first stage, but its international expansion was carried out depending on imports from emerging countries. See Giertz-Manterson, "H&M," 204–6.
27 MacCarthy and Jayarathne, "Fast Fashion: Achieving Global Quick Response," 39.
28 Gereffi and Memedovic, *The Global Apparel Value Chain*, 8.
29 Rivoli, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy*, 179–81.
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15 Bangladesh Garment Industry

Shahidur Rahman

Introduction

In the 1970s, development economist J.R. Parkinson described Bangladesh as a test case of development and Henry Kissinger, the U.S. Secretary of State, labeled Bangladesh as an international basket case because of challenges of food security, no industrial base, very low level of per capital income with higher population growth, and a dominant rural society. Defying overwhelming odds, Bangladesh has graduated from least developing to lower-middle-income country. With the availability of means for population planning and the government's aggressive campaign for population control, the fertility rate started declining. Despite the decline of cultivable land, rice production has increased from 17.6 million metric tons in 1975–76 to 34.5 million metric tons in 2013–14; exporting 12,500 metric tons to Sri Lanka in 2015.[1] In addition to increased rice production, the development of rural roads and the expansion of micro-credit for the poor are also the factors behind the transformation of the economy of Bangladesh. The generation of employment for unskilled workers in the overseas markets is another reason for the development of Bangladesh. Remittance from this migrated workforce is a key source of foreign currency for the country. The GDP growth has increased from 0.8% in 1980 to 8.15% in 2019; the size of the economy has grown from US$35 billion in the mid-1990s to US$348 billion in 2020, per capita income rose from US$320 in the 1970s to US$2064 in 2020, foreign aid dependence declined from 8% of GDP in the 1980s to just about 2% by the end of 2018.[2] In the international forum, Bangladesh is now considered as a "development model" in the development discourse.

Among the different contributors to the development of Bangladesh, the development of labor-intensive export-oriented industries is the crucial factor behind the rapid transformation of the economy of Bangladesh. Since independence, the Bangladeshi economy has been dependent on agriculture, and most of the population lives in rural areas. But since the 1980s the development of the export sector has come to be seen as increasingly important. After the collapse of the domination of export earnings from jute, the government's attention turned to the role of the manufacturing sector, especially the garment industry, as the new engine for economic growth.[3] The 1980s mark the beginning of the rapid integration of Bangladesh's garment industry into the global garment chain. In the 1970s and 1980s, the nation depended so heavily on foreign aid that the international community speculated that there was no possibility of the country developing without aid and that dependency on aid would therefore continue. But the emergence of the garment industry has challenged that idea. One of the pillars of the development of Bangladesh is the contribution from the export oriented ready-made

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garment (RMG) industry. The share of garments in total exports was only 0.42% in 1980, but by the end of 2009 it rose to 79%. The RMG's contribution to GDP has increased from almost nothing in 1976–77 to 11.17% in 2017–18. According to Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, export earnings, that were less than one million in the beginning, increased to US$2,228.35 million in 1994–95, and US$34,133.27 million in 2018–19.[4]

From this context, this chapter aims to explore four questions. First, considering the political and economic conditions of the country in the 1970s, the integration of Bangladesh into the global market through the export of ready-made garments (RMG) industry was not anticipated. What made it possible for the origin of the Bangladesh RMG industry? Second, the significant growth of the Bangladesh garment industry has replaced jute as the dominant export sector of Bangladesh since the 1980s. What was the economic and social impact of this sector on the country? Third, despite positive economic and social impacts, the RMG industry in Bangladesh is well known for its failure to ensure the safety of workers at workplaces. The sustained failure of the government of Bangladesh to address workplace safety was exposed on April 24, 2013, in the collapse of Rana Plaza, an eight-storied building housing five garment factories, in which 1,136 workers lost their lives and nearly 2,600 were injured. What do we learn from the vulnerability of workers from their experiences of negotiating with the global labor standard? Fourth, the sustainability of the Bangladesh RMG industry depends on how local stakeholders are negotiating with the challenges as it is learnt from the 43 years of history of the industry that "business as usual" cannot take the industry much further from here on. What are the key challenges for the sustainability of the Bangladesh RMG? These four questions have been responded to in this chapter by looking at research findings I have published in two books: *Broken Promises of Globalisation* (2014) and *The Bangladesh Garment Industry and the Global Garment Supply Chain* (2021).[5]

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section tells us the story behind the rapid growth of the Bangladesh RMG industry with a particular focus on the role of global trade agreements and changing government policy. The economic and social impact of the industry is presented in the second section from which we learn how export earning has generated jobs for women who remained unemployed in the formal sector for a long time in the patriarchal society. However, women empowerment through the channel of the export oriented industry has been achieved by compromising with the unsafe working conditions which are examined in the third section. The fourth section of this chapter addresses three challenges of sustainability: Transnational governance i.e. the Bangladesh Accord on fire and building safety (hereafter Accord) and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (hereafter Alliance), lower prices offered by the buyers and the impact of COVID-19, followed by concluding remarks in the last section.

Inception of the Bangladesh RMG Industry

Since the late nineteenth century, the jute industry has been critical to Bangladesh's economic growth and has been the primary export commodity. However, the jute market collapsed in the late 1970s as a result of the persistent danger of floods, dropping worldwide jute fiber prices, and a large decline in global demand. Since the 1980s, the garment industry has surpassed jute and assumed a dominant position in the export sector. The rise of clothing has been critical in reducing poverty and creating economic possibilities for millions who previously did not have them. In 1980–81, garments accounted for just 0.42% of Bangladesh's exports; however, their contribution to exports has increased to more than 80%—making them the largest contributor to Bangladesh's exports. One of the primary drivers of this expansion was the 1974 implementation of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA), a worldwide trade pact. The developed world used the MFA to impose harsher protectionist restrictions on the import of textiles and clothing from developing nations, a tactic that violated the norms of the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade.[6] The MFA had a markedly varied effect on nations based on their classification as least developed countries (LDCs) or not. MFA limitations harmed non-LDC nations like Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea, who were the largest exporters of textiles and apparel. Due to the fact that the MFA's quotas were bilateral, buyers and producers sought to relocate activities to quota-free parts of the globe. As a consequence, established garment exporters from newly industrializing countries (NICs) such as Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan expanded their businesses into Bangladesh and other LDCs. They found Bangladesh as a prospective investment destination during their quest.[7] The partnership of a local private garment enterprise in Bangladesh, Desh Garments Limited, with a Korean company, Daewoo, in 1978 is a key illustration of the NIC's' influence on industrialization in LDCs. From the writings of Rahman (2014), it is evident that Daewoo inked a five-year partnership deal with Desh in 1980, which covered technical training, the procurement of equipment and fabric, plant setup, and marketing, in exchange for a particular marketing fee on all exports made by Desh throughout the contract time.[3] Daewoo also gave in-depth practical training to Desh personnel in a global company's work environment. Daewoo worked closely with Desh in the acquisition of machines and textiles. Several Daewoo specialists traveled to Bangladesh to assist in the establishment of the Desh factory and 130 employees of Desh had training from Daewoo's plant in Korea. The partnership yielded considerable results.

A significant export earning has been made possible since 2010 as Bangladesh has enjoyed more benefits under EU's GSP scheme under the EBA (Everything But Arms) arrangement. This arrangement provides duty free access to the EU for exports of all products with the exception of arms and ammunition.[8] This has had a significant impact on earnings through export, especially during the policy's consolidation since 2010.

Another factor contributing to Bangladesh's recent rise in the garment sector is the government's trade-friendly policies. Following 1975, government policy shifted away from regulation and towards market-based reforms.[9] During this time period, the state also started the process of liberalizing the external sector, gradually shifting away from the inward-looking import substitution policy it had previously pursued and toward an outward-looking export-oriented approach. The government has implemented a number of initiatives to capitalize on the worldwide market, including back-to-back Letters of Credit, bonded warehousing facilities, and the establishment of export processing zones.[10] As a result of this debate, we may conclude that external pressures have paved the way for Bangladeshi industrialization particularly in the garment industry (Figure 15.1).

Economic and Social Impact

Comparing the garment industry's export share to that of other export commodities is one approach to determine its economic effect. Bangladesh's primary exports are textiles, jute and jute-related products, tea, leather, frozen food, and ceramic tableware. Among them, garments represent the most important export industry; their proportion of total exports was just 0.42% in 1980, while the other items contributed more than 99%.[11] Within a

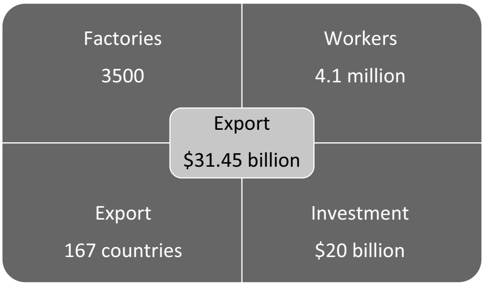

Figure 15.1 Snapshot of the Bangladesh RMG industry.

Source: BGMEA (2021) The Apparel Story.

decade, garments surpassed agriculture as the country's primary export industry, accounting for 42.8% of total exports in 1990. Since the inception of this business, the contribution of garments to exports has increased, while other items' export share has decreased.

The garment sector has a direct influence on Bangladesh's economy, as seen by the contribution of garment exports to the country's GDP. Islam and Quddus (1996) discovered that overall exports contributed 5.8% to GDP in 1976–77 and 7.6% in 1990–91. The RMG's contribution to GDP has climbed steadily over time, from nearly nothing in 1976–77 to roughly 3.5% in 1990–91 and 11.17% in 2017–18.[8] Export earning was close to US$32 million in the financial year of 1983–84 but increased to US $2,228.35 million in 1994–95 and to US$34133.27 million at the end of 2018–19 (Figure 15.2). Although a significant drop of export earning is noticed in the following figure in 2019–20 because of the withdrawal of orders from the buyers during the COVID-19, the sector reclaimed the momentum in the next financial year.

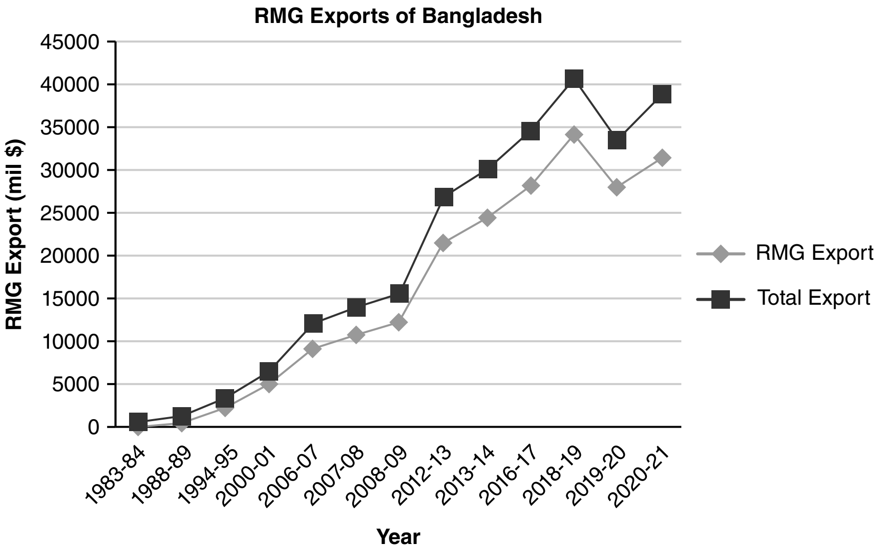

Figure 15.2 Export earnings from 1983–84 to 2020–21.

Source: Prepared by the author using data from BGMEA (2020).

Nearly one-fifth of the women engaged in the industrial sector were employed in the manufacturing sector.[12] The entry of these garment workers into the paid labor market has had a tremendous effect on poverty. Kabeer and Mahmud established a link between women's work in the garment sector and family poverty levels.[13] The first facet of this link is that the advent of the garment industry has created paid work options for women who had previously been excluded from the labor market. These are the ladies who have just joined the paid labor force for the first time. Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) discovered that the average monthly income of 1,322 female employees and their homes was almost twice the monthly per capita "poverty line" income. This means that their monthly wages could sustain at least one additional adult or two children, and they never earned less than the poverty level. According to the authors, the second component of the link between women's employment and poverty is that these women garment workers earned enough money to cover their basic requirements and to help other family members by sending remittances to relatives living in rural.

Perhaps most notably, the rise of the garment industry has resulted in significant female work outside the family unit in Bangladesh. In 1967, women held just 5% of total paid jobs.[14] Since Bangladesh's independence, a critical issue has been the failure to incorporate women into sectors and programs linked with economic growth. Prior to the 1980s, the situation for women was far worse. We need to study Bangladeshi culture and society to understand the causes for this exclusion. A patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal social framework has controlled the lives of Bangladeshi women.[15] The typical societal view is that males perform all of the productive labor and that women are completely reliant on them.[16] The mandated woman's role includes family upkeep, childrearing, and other domestic responsibilities. Aside from these duties, women in rural Bangladesh assist their families in the processing of crops once they have been harvested. Women were physically restricted to their houses until recently, and they were barred from the public domain of fields, marketplaces, highways, and cities.[17] Socioeconomic disparity creates a clear sexual division of labor, and this inequality pervades every area of women's life.

Although Chen contends that NGO activities have greatly increased women's labor-force involvement, Kabeer (2001) feels that, despite the development of NGO initiatives, the direct influence of NGOs on women's labor-force participation has remained minor. Kabeer further claims that the garment manufacturing business has brought women into the labor market on a significant scale and with adequate visibility after a decade of government and non-government initiatives had failed. It has aided in the formation of a new industrial working class in the nation. Some gender-related issues influence garment firms' decisions to hire more women than males.[18] Employers regard women as more controlled than males, less mobile, and less likely to join a trade union, according to Paul-Majumder and Begum, and they may perform better in sewing since it overlaps with their conventional employment.

For the first time, Bangladeshi women have been allowed to actively participate in the paid labor market via this business. However, in recent years, women's labor force participation in the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry has been declining. Rahman's (2018) paper on "Revisiting Empowerment" kicks off the conversation on growing female unemployment in Bangladesh's textile industry. According to the research, according to a 2015 survey conducted by the Asian Centre for Development, 65% of employees in the RMG industry were women. In the factories monitored by the ILO RMG program, women made up just 58% of the labor force, contrary to the often cited claim that women made up 80% of the labor force in the garment sector. According to the executive director of the Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies, the overall number of garment workers in Bangladesh fell from 4.4 million in 2013 to 3.6 million in 2017. Why do all of these statistics show that women's involvement in this area is declining? There is no specific data as to why female labor engagement in the garment industry is declining, as well as where they are transferring to and how this has impacted their lives. Nonetheless, one hypothesis might be advanced as a potential explanation for the decline in female participation in this field. As significant capital investments have been made in the Bangladesh garment sector, a beneficial transition from manual labor to automation has occurred. The adoption of more modern technology is the current need of the global supply chain, and as such, huge garment firms in Bangladesh have responded to this transformation in order to produce quality clothing in vast quantities. Technology is in the process of replacing labor; reliance on automation has resulted in a decline in employment size.

Labor Standard, Vulnerability of Workers, and Rana Plaza

Looking back at the 1980s and considering the socioeconomic conditions of the country, the decision to work in the garment industry was a difficult choice for the workers. Rather its better to say they did not have a better option than to joining the sector. The first hurdle was to migrate to the city and find a job in factories. Their experiences of relocation were usually unpleasant as they struggled to adjust to the urbanized atmosphere, as explained by urban sociologists. They were nervous about connecting with others, knowing the responsibilities of their jobs, operating sewing machines, and, most importantly, feeling free to work in an environment that was quite different from village life. However, their desire to become empowered and cooperation from social networking have enabled them to progressively overcome these obstacles. Gradually they have learned to walk in the city with confidence while leaving behind their sorrows in the villages as jobs in the garment industry have become a source of income as well as inspiration. Their involvement in the industry has become so valuable to these women that they are willing to give up almost anything in their lives to keep their jobs because they know that no other profession is accessible to them and that this type of occupation is perfectly suited for them. Garment employers are also aware of the widespread perception that these workers will fight for their jobs at any cost, even if they are subjected to hazardous working conditions.

Taking advantage of the availability of cheap labor, the first wave of the transition of the Bangladesh RMG was shaped by the internationalization of production or the global shift of production which has initiated the relocation of production from high-wage countries to low-wage countries.[19] From diverse backgrounds, the garment entrepreneurs started to invest in this industry and flourished with very limited labor surveillance. In most of the factories, workers were forced to work 14–16 hours per day, ignoring the labor law and 90% of garment workers have experienced illness or disease at workplaces.[20] The second wave launched with an intension to improve working conditions by introducing a social clause in trade agreements in the 1990s and early 2000s, a set of minimum international labor standards encapsulated by the core labor conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), including prohibition of child labor, forced labor, and discrimination, with union rights serving as the key means for addressing all working condition problems.[21] It places lead firm-supplier relations at the center of an explanation of variations in labor standards in supplier factories.[22] The second wave has made an improvement in the working conditions in the Bangladesh garment industry by removing child labor from the sector in the late 1990s as well as forming a welfare committee in the EPZ (Rahman 2014). Buyers have exercised influence over the suppliers through the requirement that they follow a code of conduct specifying international labor standards and agree to regular auditing by the lead firm and/or a third party. Because of such pressure, the Labor Act was finally passed in 2006—almost 14 years of establishment of the commission and the minimum wage increased after more than a decade.

Yet evidence suggests that buyers' code of conduct produces limited results (Locke 2013).[23] As a result of the ineffectiveness of buyers' code of conduct, the sufferings of the workers have continues; approximately 245 garment employees have died and hundreds injured in Bangladesh from 2000 to 2006 in workplace accidents (Rahman 2014). In spite of this appalling state of affairs, no effective action has been taken by the government to prevent or reduce similar incidents in the future. In general, the responsibility of the government in such cases should be to investigate the accident, cancel the company's license, impose huge penalties, and inspect other garment factories to ensure safety and security. In practice, while minimal compensation is provided to workers, no effective action has been implemented by both companies and the government. The failure of public and private governance has ended up in the worst industrial accident of the world. On 24th of April 2013, an eight-storied building known as Rana Plaza collapsed, killing at least 1,134 garment workers due to structural failure. The tragedy sent a shockwave to the world and the key stakeholders such as the government of Bangladesh, manufacturers and buyers were heavily criticized by the global leaders. The initial reaction was to boycott Bangladesh RMG but later the Bangladeshi government has agreed to execute an independent intervention by the transnational actors and paved the way for the emergence of Accord and Alliance to ensure structural safety of factory building.

In response to the pressures triggered after 2013, apart from factory building safety through Accord and Alliance, the government ultimately announced a new pay system in 2018, with a minimum wage of Tk. 8000 ($100). However, in recent days, the issue has shifted from the minimum wage to the living wage. Workers in Dhaka satellite towns should be paid Tk. 13,630, while those in Dhaka city should be paid Tk. 16,460.[24] According to the calculations in this report, the present minimum wage is 43 to 51% of the living wage. The income disparity between employees and the growing cost of necessary items due to high inflation has widened. Workers are unable to satisfy their basic demands as a result of this. The Bangladeshi government has been unable to provide a reasonable national minimum wage while also keeping commodities prices under control. In spite of this frustration, the fact is the working conditions in this sector are better than in the past as explored in a recent study of 1,500 workers conducted by Kabeer et al. (2020).[25] This study finds that the average basic salary was greater than the prevailing minimum wage, more than 90% of workers reported having permanent status, ID cards, paid leave, and maternity leave. In most workplaces, particularly in large factories, working conditions have improved significantly after the Rana Plaza tragedy in comparison to the 1980s.

It is always a challenging task to raise voices against violation of labor standards in countries like Bangladesh where women have very limited options to a decent job. They face a dilemma of keeping the job, compromising unhealthy working conditions, and the unions as well as feminine scholars are divided into this issue. One group argues that cheap labor is a comparative advantage for the Bangladeshi garment companies in the regime of neoliberalism. To take advantage of low cost of productions, corporations from the developed world have explored Bangladesh. The government of this low wage country has

Table 15.1 Changing Nature of Sustainability Challenges

Time	*Sustainability Challenges*
Late 1990s	Threat to withdraw investment by the American government for child labor
2004–2005	Abolition of MFA: Trade in a quota free world with no trade preferences
	Not allowing union in the EPZ
2013	Rana Plaza Collapse: Boycott Bangladesh
2018–2021	Withdraw GSP by the United States
2022–2024	Expiry of Accord and Alliance
	Graduation from LDC to lower--middle-income country and no duty free access to the EU. Access to GSP plus.
2020–till present	Lower labor productivity, COVID-19, squeezing prices, and less lead time due to fast fashion business model.

Source: Prepared by the author (2022)

presented the industry in a way that is profitable for the buyers. With absence of inclusive political institutions, the earning of the foreign buyers is much higher than countries having strong labor monitoring systems. In such working environments, a garment factory job is the only decent job option for female workers of Bangladesh and getting access to the factory is considered the path to empowerment. The popular narrative is working in a non-compliant factory is better than being employed as a sex worker or a domestic care worker. The proposal to add a social clause (complying with ILO core labor standards) in the WTO trade agreement was rejected in the late 1990s. The supporter of this line of scholars and unions has opted for "do nothing" approach in the question of protecting labor rights in the Bangladesh RMG industry until the Rana Plaza tragedy. On the contrary, there is another group who strongly believes in the establishment of labor standards without any compromise. To them, compliance to labor laws is the only way to women empowerment and sustainable development which has appeared right particularly after the collapse of Rana Plaza. In this context, Table 15.1 presents the nature of sustainability challenges the Bangladesh RMG industry has faced since the 1990.

Challenges of Sustainability

The present problem for the export-oriented Bangladesh garment industry is its sustainability. At different times of history the industry has faced various challenges of sustainability as presented in the following table. As a LDC, Bangladesh received duty-free access to the EU under "Everything but Arm" scheme, a destination of 58% of its export. The graduation to lower-middle-income country will not allow Bangladesh to attain this trade preference but the country can apply to GSP Plus, another specialized trade advantage for vulnerable developing countries. To be eligible for GSP Plus, which will be effective from 2024 to 2034, addressing the following challenges of sustainability is crucial. Based on research findings from different projects published in my recent book titled *The Bangladesh Garment Industry and the Global Supply Chain,* this section tackles some of the sustainability issues.

Accord-Alliance and Safety

Since the inception of the industry in the 1980s, there has been no concrete, transparent, and accountable action to address factory building safety until the Rana Plaza tragedy, although the country has a national legal policy on building code and an administration to inspect factories. There was also no active voice from the buyers to prevent accidents in factories due to fires or other hazards and finally, the Rana Plaza accident in 2013 showed Bangladesh's government's persistent inability to address workplace safety. Finding no effective role from the government or the garment entrepreneurs, the global trade unions forced the buyers to form two transnational labor governance initiatives to inspect factories independently and shut down non-compliant factories and stop doing business with factories who did not fix the problems identified by the transnational inspectors. These two transnational governance initiatives were: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety (Accord) and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance) (Alliance). Inspired by the Accord-Alliance, the government of Bangladesh has formed a "National Initiative," another governing mechanism to monitor factories not inspected by the transnational governances. The Accord was a legally binding independent five-year agreement between EU brands and trade unions. The Alliance comprised a similar five-year commitment to improve safety in Bangladesh RMG plants, particularly from North American purchasers. The Accord and Alliance not only gave buyers a reprieve from their respective customers and other stakeholders, but the Bangladesh government and employers in the RMG sector saw it as a critical milestone for the country's and industry's reputation. The distinguishing element of these two initiatives was that all suppliers manufacturing for Accord and Alliance signatory buyers had passed an independent fire, electrical, and structural safety inspections of industrial structures. Each factory's compliance report was published on the internet, making the factory's current compliance status public. The buyer's order was contingent on the supplier's action in addressing the issues identified by the Accord and Alliance inspection teams. The formation of two transnational and one national initiative after the Rana Plaza has had an enormous impact on the workplace safety. About 4,000 factories have been inspected by the inspectors of the Accord, Alliance, and National Initiative, corrective action plans were provided after inspection, follow-up meetings were held to monitor whether the problems have been fixed or not, inspection reports were publicly published, non-compliant factories were closed down, communicated with buyers about the progress. Such intervention was quite a new chapter in the industrial history of the world and researches have been conducting on the effectiveness of Accord and Alliance. In spite of the success stories of these two transnational governances, there was a huge pressure from the Bangladeshi garment owners supported by the government to discontinue their operation in Bangladesh. The managements' perspectives of Accord-Alliance is published in a research conducted by Rahman and Rahman (2020). According this research, the lack of buyer support has created a significant obstacle to the long-term viability of transnational governance structure. This new approach had created an opportunity for buyers to increase their supremacy over suppliers. Historically, multinational companies have maintained their power over their suppliers by setting rigorous constraints primarily on pricing, quality, and delivery schedules (Locke et al. 2009).[26] Suppliers under Accord and Alliance recognize that there is no way to escape from safety compliances, although raised concerns about the inspection mode (Rahman and Rahman 2020). They were afraid of confronting the inspectors of Accord-Alliance due of the power imbalance. This is good from a safety standpoint, but the leading corporations had only made a minimal contribution to the improvements, while suppliers had been obliged to transfer money from profits to employees' safety. The Accord's greater power to influence suppliers derived from the inter-firm collaboration it involved, not its legal position (Scheper 2017).[27] Eventually, Accord and Alliance did not survive, although the initiators intended to continue operating after the agreement expired. These two transnational governance initiatives have been replaced by a national RMG safety institution known as the "RMG Sustainability Council" (RSC), which is now managed by representatives of the BGMEA, global brands, and global and national trade unions. It is still not clear how the RSC is going to operate and if it will it be effective enough to eradicate safety hazards and continue to the successes achieved during the regime of Accord-Alliance.

Squeezing Prices

The second sustainability concern is buyers' demand to lower prices. While the cost of production is increasing all the time, as the suppliers believe, the price offered by the buyers is decreasing. To maintain the global labor standard, representative from buyers audit the factories of their suppliers or appoint third party to inspect the factories to find out if the working conditions are in alignment with the labor law of Bangladesh and other international labor convention. In the past, these audits were only confined with social compliance such as use of child labor and minimum wage but after the Rana Plaza structural compliance has become a major concern. It is crucial before placing any order to check the safety of factory building which is very expensive to maintain. In some cases, as in the experiences of Accord and Alliance, the entire factory had to rebuild from scratch and shifted to a new place where the factory was built in line with the engineering safety protocol of the Accord and Alliance. Another compliance cost has recently been added that can play a significant role for the sustainability of the industry and it is business responsibility to environment since climate change has become a global problem. The management is upgrading the factory by installing energy-efficient resources, saving water, and introducing green technology. These developments have an effect on the competitive advantage of the Bangladesh RMG industry but for the sustainability of these changes in social, structural, and environmental compliances, the suppliers expect an increase in the prices of their products from the buyers. Instead, we are witnessing a completely opposite scenario. Even though the orders have continued, buyer prices have declined. According to Anner's (2018) report, which is based on a survey of 223 manufacturers in Bangladesh, the price paid by purchasers to suppliers has decreased by 13% after the Rana Plaza catastrophe, and lead time has decreased by 8.14% between 2011 and 2015. Anner's (2018) analysis found that in 2011, big global brands granted manufacturers in Bangladesh an average of 94 days to fulfill an order; by 2016, this had dropped to 86 days, an 8.14% decrease.[28] In a management poll, other suppliers highlighted the vulnerability of suppliers in terms of ethical pricing.

> On buyer's demand, we are investing a lot on compliance issues but they [buyers]
>
> Are not willing to give a good price by which we might have to do a minimum profit. Now we are doing business for the sake of our factory and workers only because if the factory closed there will be huge unemployment.[29]
>
> For each product, the buyer paid 5 dollars and sold it at 12.5 pounds in the market. After Brexit, the buyer curtailed the price to 10 pounds.[30]

The fast fashion business model, as much as customers, are to blame for price increases, as Taplin (2014)[31] contends that, from a larger structural standpoint, suppliers have been under more pressure due to the "fast fashion" business model. According to the author, the advent of this new model is the natural extension of Lean Retaining (LR) and Quick Response (QR) and is aimed to generate low-cost stylish things for young clients with little means. Western customers have pushed the desire for a wider range of garments at ever-lower prices under the regime of "quick fashion." Instead of three seasons every year, merchants have induced a shift in fashion virtually every month. As a result, "… retailers have reconfigured supply chains to facilitate speed and low-cost production; subcontractors have aggressively competed with each other to gain valuable orders, resulting in intensified work and depressed wages" (Taplin 2014:79).[32] Surprisingly, the ordinary Western consumer is hesitant to pay more for apparel and is uninterested in changing their purchase habits (Taplin 2014).[33] This technique has been shown to be successful, and providers eventually have no choice but to accept the cheap price provided by the purchasers.

Impact of COVID-19

Another newly identified sustainability concern is COVID-19, a pandemic that has shuttered the RMG industry. At the initial stage, there was a delay of shipments of raw materials from China as the virus was detected here first. The pandemic has prompted fashion boutiques, brands, and budget stores to close their doors. The shuttered storefronts in the major importing nations are evidence of the garment industry's worst crisis in a generation. Consumers have stayed at home to practice social distance, resulting in a sharp drop in demand for new apparel. Bangladesh's garment exports fell by more than 62% in the first 29 days of May 2020 as compared to the same time the previous year. Buyers' estimated orders were canceled or on hold, ranging from $273 million to $23 million that they had already placed to the Bangladeshi manufacturers by falsely using the *force majeure* clause. There was no way for the factory owners to escape financial disaster, leading to have a ripple effect on the livelihoods of almost 4 million garment workers. Nazma Akhtar, a major union leader, characterized the employees' vulnerability in the following way:

> The cruel reality is that the sufferer is our worker, they are the most vulnerable. The manufactures will be losing profit, but it is the worker who will lose their food. We have to think about the people who made you [brands] profit for years. When they need you, you cannot leave them in a starving situation. All these years we worked to make your companies so much profit. We did that together. We should be in this together.[34]

In order to prepare for the potential economic effect of COVID-19, the government of Bangladesh has launched a $590 million stimulus program for the RMG industry. This fund was created as an interest-free loan for the express purpose of paying workers' salaries and benefits for up to three months.[35] However, the BIGD's 2020 analysis included some criticism of the government's stimulus package from unions.[36] They questioned (a) the fund's sufficiency, pointing out that the present size of the government's fund is only around 51% of what is required to pay the minimum wage for three months and cover at least 4,000 companies.

It is said that the crises also creates an opportunity to fill up the holes in the system and make the industry stronger. Transparency of resource distribution has always been an issue. When the compensation to Rana Plaza victims was distributed critiques raised the question of who got what, why, and how. Similarly in the wake of pandemic, whether or not the workers have attained the stimulus package offered by the government was also an unsettled concern. The transparency of distribution of government's funding for the workers' wage could be ensured by the installation of database of workers. The absence of this database is again realized during the pandemic. The policymakers can also organize a discussion on changes in legislations against the context of the pandemic. We know that about 80 amendments were made in the Bangladesh Labor Act 2006 to deal with the Rana Plaza. Now is the time to think about what needs to be proposed to the Occupational Health and Safety Policy 2013 and the urgency to develop a national action plan of health and safety. Further research is essential in the area of labor rights of workers in particular what role has been taken by different labor organisation: Participation Committee at the factory, National trade union in the industry, labor wing of national political party, and global labor union. The merits and disadvantages of these different labor platforms and the causes and consequences of their integration or disintegration would be analyzed. It is equally important to track the livelihoods and well-being of workers during the entire period of the pandemic. Garment orders have bounded back and there has been a huge pressure on the workers to make up the losses and eventually less lead time is demanded from the buyers and more overtime is expected from the garment owners. How the workers have been adjusting with this pressure and what needs to be done to prevent overly stressful work can be a concern for the policymakers.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Bangladesh holds a key position in Asia as the economy of this South Asian country has been progressively integrating over time and the probability of its emerging in the foreseeable future is reasonably high. The growth of Bangladesh's economy is now mainly driven by three sectors: Agriculture, export-oriented ready-made garment industry, and remittance from overseas. Out of these three key sectors, the garment industry is the engine of the economic growth of Bangladesh after following the export-led development strategy, as is explored in this chapter. It is very important to sustain the growth of garments not only for the economy of this emerging lower-middle-income country but also for the social development of Bangladesh, bearing in mind its effect on changing the lives of female workers who have been able to participate in the paid labor market for the first time. However, the vulnerability of the workers is also evident in this chapter as they could not escape from the Rana Plaza calamity. The ray of hope was the execution of Accord and Alliance, a completely new transnational labor governance initiative; but the demise of this approach has raised concerns for workplace safety once again. Although RMG Sustainability Council has replaced Accord and Alliance, it is too early to be confident in this governance approach. Along with labor governance and safety, there is no way to give less importance to the other sustainability challenges, such as the impact of COVID-19 and squeezing of buying by offering lower prices.

Lack of trust between different stakeholders needs to be improved to address the sustainability challenges not only mentioned in this chapter but also others not explained here. If we see the relationship between buyers and suppliers, first take into consideration what one party thinks of others. From my research projects, it appears that some suppliers argue that the buyers are not introducing various upgrading projects for their benefit. To the suppliers, the buyers are mainly interested in the traceability of the price. They are placing suppliers' entire cost structure under the lenses of their microscope so that they can find out the calculation of each cent manufacturers preserve as their profit.

The buyers are taking all these details in the process of project execution and later come to suppliers, for example, with a list chemicals and advice suppliers to use those. Then the suppliers are forced to use those and eventually the buyers know the cost behind chemical use. The buyers may also recommend suppliers to use particular software for planning enterprise resources so that they can trace managements' cost from far away. Such thoughts actually damage the relationship of trust between buyers and suppliers which can be minimized by forming a culture of open dialogue as well as a space for the suppliers to demonstrate their perspectives. We can explain space for suppliers from one project named Better Work initiated by the ILO in collaboration with the IFC. How to create the development of a factory by keeping the labor standards in mind - this is the main goal of this project. Here ownership of the project is a big concern. Better Work staff comes to a factory to see how to increase the development of the factory by audit. This is good because they are working both with owners and workers. But the first thing that comes is the term "audit." An audit is done in a factory in a way that after getting the result the factory needs to rectify it. If they don't rectify it, in that case, the result that they get from the audit leads to failure. Now, every factory is doing an audit for their buyers and there is a close connection between the audit and their production order. When ILO brought this project to ensure compliance, the question emerged about the reliability of this audit. A good number of audits are operating in the factory that is similar to Better Work. The suppliers should be given freedom to choose or avoid and if they think Better Work is a duplication of another project, they should have the space to reject it without any consequences. But the reality is suppliers can't say "No" to the buyers who are mainly proposing projects like Better Work because they don't want to upset buyers. In this case, the buyers can come forward to develop a relationship of trust and openness with the suppliers so that projects cannot be imposed.

What is the way forward to deal with some challenges articulated in this chapter? Women's empowerment is ensured in the export-oriented garment industry, but their skills need to be upgraded to uphold the achievement attained so far. Mobilization of resources should be allocated by the state not only to the large and medium factories but also to the small factories in the journey of sustainability. After the Rana Plaza tragedy, there is no way to deny that a long-term buyer-supplier relationship, collaboration with different stakeholders, and the proactive role of educational institutions to supply skilled workforce are crucial for the sustainability of the Bangladesh garment industry. Since most buyers have an office in Bangladesh, the management attends the meeting, training, and seminar organized by these buyers. Their presence in the sourcing country generates an opportunity for the buyers to be closely involved in different capacity-building projects. Further research is required to find out the capacity of the Bangladesh government and local stakeholders to continue the works started by the Accord and Alliance. A positive lesson to be taken from COVID-19, as argued by Mostafiz Uddin (2020), is greater collaboration among garment manufacturers globally.[37] The solidarity of suppliers is required not only from the local context but also from the global landscape since all suppliers have faced a global and common problem.

Notes

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2 Rahman, "The Bangladesh Garment Industry and the Global Supply Chain: Choices and Constraints of Management."
3 Rahman, "*Broken promises of globalization: The case of the Bangladesh garment industry.*"
4 BGMEA, "Trade Information."
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6 Smith, *"The Multi fibre Arrangement – A thread of protectionism."*
7 Custers, "Capital accumulation and women's labor in Asian economies.", London: Zed. Cyber Bangladesh, "Bangladesh Human Rights practices 1994."
8 European Commission, *Bangladesh Sustainability Compact: Technical Status Report.*
9 Islam & Quddus, "The export garment industry in Bangladesh: A potential catalyst for breakthrough" (pp. 167–98).
10 One of the important measures that the Bangladeshi government has introduced for the garment industry is Back-to-Back Letters of Credit (BB/LC). These are used in international and domestic trade. The parties to a BB/LC are: the buyer and their bank, the seller/manufacturer and their bank, and the manufacturer's supplier and their bank. This type of documentary credit transaction is used when a seller/manufacturer has to purchase a component but may not have the cash flow to do so. For instance, the owner of a garment company in Bangladesh gets an order from a buyer and needs to import materials that are not available in the local market. In this situation, the buyer opens a LC in a local bank that guarantees the payment of the export and the bank informs the exporter about the LC. The Bangladeshi entrepreneur then opens another LC with a local bank to import the materials and does not need to spend money. The buyer or any other supplier sends the shipment of these materials to the Bangladeshi garment owner. After receiving the imported materials, the entrepreneur produces the garments and sends them to the buyer. The owner of the garment company receives the amount of the export minus the cost of the import and the bank's commission. The bank also supplies the cost of imports to the buyer or supplier.
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12 Zohir, & Paul-Majumder. *"Garment workers in Bangladesh: Economic, Social and Health conditions."* Research Monograph No. 18, Dhaka: BIDS.
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19 Spencer, Gereffi, & Bair, "Introduction: The apparel industry and North American economic integration." (pp. 3–22).
20 Paul-Majumder, "Occupational hazards and health consequences of the growth of garment industry in Bangladesh." (pp.172–207).
21 Berik, Gunseli, "Revisiting the Feminist Debates on International Labour Standards in the Aftermath of Rana Plaza."
22 Gereffi, Humphrey, and Sturgeon, 'The governance of global value chains', *Review of International Political Economy,* 12(1): 78–104.
23 Locke, "*The promise and limits of private power: Promoting labor standards in a global economy.*"
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25 Kabeer, Solaiman and Huq "*Paradigm Shift or Business as Usual?" Workers' Views on Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives in Bangladesh.* n.p.: Development and Change. pp.1–39.
26 Locke, Amengual, & Mangla, "*Virtue out of Necessity? Compliance, Commitment, and the Improvement of Labor Conditions in Global Supply Chains. Politics & Society*," 37(3), 319–51.
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16 Fashioning Contemporary Yoruba Cultural Identities, an Exploration of Africa Fashion Week Nigeria

Tolulope Omoyele

Introduction

As Fletcher and Grose argue, "At its creative best, fashion helps us to reflect who we are as individuals while connecting us to wide social groups, providing a sense of individuality and belonging. Fashion is a connector, linking people across demographics, socio-economic groups and nationalities, and an attractor, drawing people into a movement for change."[1] This view of the function of fashion in society is mirrored at AFWN, a promotional and communication tool for marketing Nigerian and African fashions and identities. An examination of AFWN reveals and unravels how Nigerian fashion practitioners think about fashion, gender, nationality, and ethnic and regional identities shaped by local and global forces and processes. AFWN organizers opine that the event's primary focus is "to use fashion as an instrument of sustainability and social change. We believe that for creativity to grow, there needs to be a platform that promotes and supports its growth" (Africa Fashion Week Nigeria 2022[2]). As the quote above highlights, organizers of AFWN conceive fashion as a creative practice, an instrument for fostering sustainable development and social change in contemporary Nigeria. This begs the question, who are AFWN's key players and stakeholders? How and why do these key players frame sustainability, social change, and creativity through fashion? How and why do AFWN organizers use and conceive of fashion as an instrument of sustainability and social change in Nigeria? In what ways can Nigerian fashion designers cultivate ethical and reciprocal collaboration with local indigenous artisans? Exploration of these topics and issues demands a historical account of Nigerian society's sociopolitical environment and how these events continue to shape Nigerian fashion systems and identities.

Overview of the Nigerian Fashion System

Nigerian fashion is understood as a "system of institutions, organizations, groups, producers, events and practices, all of which contribute to the making of fashion."[3] Crucial to this sociological definition of fashion is macro-level concepts of system and institution. A system refers to a set or collection of interconnected components: Things, practices, people, events, and organizations, organized for a common purpose. Whereas a social "institution is an established and organised system of social behaviour with a recognised purpose […] it refers to the broad systems that organise specific functions in society."[4] Kawamura defines a "social system as the residents of a city, the students at a school, a group of friends, or any other group of individuals who regularly interact. Each interaction can be considered as an act of communication through which information

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and influence concerning an innovation, such as a new style of clothing can be spread."[5] The application of this notion of a system can be seen in Kawamura (2005) examination of the French fashion system. The author identified several sub-systems comprised of a network of designers, manufacturers, wholesalers, public relations officers, journalists, and advertising agencies who design, produce, and distribute fashion to the consuming public. Thus, the fashion system refers to the processes in which fashion is produced, diffused, consumed, and adopted through the collective social activity of a network of people, practitioners, groups, and individuals working together directly or indirectly.[6] Also, Entwistle explains that the fashion system is "made up from the daily practices and activities of a great number of spatially dispersed actors circulating raw materials, trends, ideas, and stylized images in the pages of magazines and finished garments and displayed in department stores and boutiques."[7] This implies fashion is a collective social activity because it depends on the interaction of a great number of people, from those sourcing the raw materials, to design professionals, tailors, and seamstresses who sew, to photographers, journalists, and editors who write about fashionable items in magazines and retailers who sell garments to consumers visiting stores/boutiques. Also, events such as fashion shows[8] and fashion weeks, fashion media: magazines[9], and fashion boutiques are among the fashion apparatuses deployed to communicate, define fashion clothing styles, shape meanings[10], as well as frame and influence our choices as consumers about what to wear, what to like, and what to buy.

My approach to Nigerian fashion as an institutional system stem from the fact that the concept of fashion means much more than the materials of clothing, luxury items, garments, and commodities we love to buy and consume on the pages of fashion magazines. Fashion generally communicates information about innovations in clothing and bodily practices: beauty and appearance. It also produces ideologies that reinforce or challenge the status quo[11]. Fashion is an economic activity as it is a cultural form. As Craik explains, the fashion industry is "a cultural industry that establishes the aesthetic and practical dimensions of our clothing habits as well as constituting a keynote global consumer industry."[12] The fashion industry, as well as the fashion apparatuses including fashion week, fashion media, and boutiques, are all instruments that help structure expectations, habits, preferences, social actions, ordered thoughts, forms, and consistency in human activities.[13]

The Nigerian fashion industry comprises a network of fashion practitioners, institutions, and clothing manufacturers, characterized by small-scale artisans, traders, and media practitioners producing and disseminating fashion information and narratives about Nigerian fashions. Increasingly, Nigerian fashion practitioners increasingly capitalize on advancements in communication technologies to diffuse and market their design outputs to global audiences. Also, trade associations such as the Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria (FADAN)—established in 1989—and the Association of Professional Fashion Practitioners of Nigeria (APFPN)—established in 2019—aim to create a collective polity to promote the collective interests of its member practitioners to the public. Trade associations include practitioners and members from across the creative and cultural industries sector—beauticians, models, photographers, designers, manufacturers, etc. In contrast to the long-established French[14] or British fashion trade associations' successes and influences on national and international fashion. The growth of fashion trade organizations in Nigeria has been stunted. This is partly because the majority of the Nigerian trade members are small-scale businesses situated between the formal and the informal economy[15]. Another reason is the instability of the Nigerian economy, coupled with the absence of government support, a culture of import, and infrastructure which impedes the growth and potentialities of these small businesses for expansion[16].

In terms of fashion institutions, there are several competing fashion week events, among which are the Nigerian Fashion Week, Arise Fashion Week, and Lagos Fashion Week operating within the Nigerian fashion system, with competing claims and interests. Also, the concentration of these events in Lagos state, suggests Lagos is the centre of designer fashion in Nigeria. The urban city plays a key role not only in the production, consumption, and diffusion of Nigerian designer fashion but also as a site where different ethnic and nationalist claims are played out.[17] The megacity Lagos, Africa's second-most populous city after Kinshasa, offers economic, political, and commercial opportunities to several nationalities, ethnicities, and social groups from across Africa and globally. The megacity of Lagos is known locally as Eko, denoting its origins as a Yoruba settlement, and has been the country's commercial centre since 1861, it became the political centre in 1914, and in 1991 it was replaced with Abuja. Lagos city consists of the Island (Ìsàlẹ̀ Èkó) and the mainland—where most of the population is concentrated. Like most megacities, Lagos is characterized by densely populated and high-brow areas. The capital of Lagos, Ikeja, is home to Nigeria's largest computer village, airline head offices, and Murtala Muhammed International Airport. Fashion week activities are concentrated in the Victoria Island (VI) area, an affluent area and Lagos' main commercial and financial district; it houses several foreign consulates/embassies, multinational companies, and luxury hotels (Alakija 2016), as well as the shopping mall Silverbird Cinemas Galleria and the Alara luxury store, a retailer of African and international fashion brands designed by architect David Adjaye for Reni Folawiyo in 2015.[18] The area plays a key role in the construction of elite narratives of Nigerian designer fashion: "an important show of urban life and its experiential aspect."[19] As Kawamura argues in her exploration of Tokyo as a fashion centre "one way to promote a fashion centre is to organize fashion shows on a regular basis."[20] Thus, VI has been established as a key site for Nigerian fashion producers to establish a strong fashion identity. The aggregate of fashion Weeks in Lagos reflects the plurality of social formations and interactions in the drive to construct and project Nigeria's design identity and modern image to the outside world. I read these events as a reflection of the transformation of Nigeria's sociopolitical environment with the increasing governmental discourse to shift from dependency on crude oil and agricultural export to the cultural industries.

Fashion weeks in Nigeria are not systematized and internally structured as the centralized systems found in Paris or New York[21], which undercuts other less prominent fashion-week-related events. Fashion is a key feature of Lagos, evincing the regularity and frequency of fashion weeks. These events attract extensive media coverage and new styles, and clothing collections are disseminated via print and digital media to a broad audience by local and international magazines, bloggers, and influencers. Research has shown that the internet has contributed to the democratization of contemporary fashion.[22] For the Nigerian fashion industry, in the digital age, social media technologies such as Twitter, Instagram, blogs, and YouTube, "as a global democratic tool," have contributed to the rapid transformation of the "production, consumption and diffusion processes of fashion."[23] Internet communication technologies facilitate the creation and dissemination of fashion information and knowledge from Africa to the world and from lesser-known cities.

In the Nigerian environment, fashion offers opportunities for social mobilities and the cultivation of strategic networks across ethnic and regional boundaries. It plays a crucial role in defining, producing, and contesting the elite and government discourse of national identity. Importantly, these events have provided a stage for the increased visibility of design practitioners from across regions in Nigeria and beyond. However, it raises the question, why are there so many fashion weeks in Nigeria, who are the key players and what messages about gender, ethnicity, nationalism, globalization, and identity are communicated? As Entwistle (2009) argues, there are plenty of things we do not know about fashion, this is particularly true of the conventions within the contemporary Nigerian fashion system and how the sociopolitical Nigerian environment has shaped Nigerian fashions.

Fashion Week as a Diffusion Strategy

Fashion weeks, particularly national ones, provide a rich case for investigating how AFWN manufactures and produces the "belief"[24] in Nigerian fashion and perhaps supports the hegemony of the ruling class. The materialization of AFWN suggests the practitioners and participants have particular and related beliefs and mental attitudes about economic productivity, and cultural heritage[25].

Fashion week is "traditionally an industry-led event, exclusive to trade professionals and named after the host city."[26] A fashion week is a temporal event that incorporates trade fairs: An exhibition of products and commodities, fashion shows, and seminars or workshops. Fashion week is also known as a fashion fair that brings "together in one place people who are engaged in the production of fashion from a wide range of professions from many different countries."[27] The importance of fashion fairs, as a social organizational instrument, reflects the configuration of the fashion industry as "highly fragmented and diverse consisting of multiple small companies"[28] spatially dispersed across the clothing, textile, and creative sectors. Fashion week is where all these practitioners converge to network, share practices, take positions and roles, and perform identities[29].

Fashion week serves multiple functions, including holding together an economic network and a social setting for different types of encounters: Trade, networking, and knowledge about trends, technologies, and markets.[30] In their examination of London Fashion Week (LFW), Entwistle and Rocamora argue that the event "is a major promotional opportunity for British fashion designers."[31] They are also sites in the production of national identities and the reproduction of the positions of key players[32] who influence meanings, in the case of AFWN, meanings of Nigerianness, Yoruba nationalism, gender roles, and regional and class politics. Also, in their examination of the fashion show, a key component of fashion week events, Skov. et al. argue that the fashion show has played a significant role in establishing the dynamics of modern fashion: Novelty and change, through the presentation of new collections on moving bodies. The authors argue that the fashion show keeps the fashion field in a state of continuous flux because new clothing is presented on the catwalk to spectating audiences comprising of buyers and the international press.[33] Further, the authors argue that the fashion show has evolved from an economic to a cultural function. Economically, the fashion show was a traditional means of selling clothes to an exclusive clientele. Today, the fashion show's cultural function is to create images and attract popular attention. This potential to create appealing images and entertain the consuming public partly explains the increasing popularity of fashion shows across cities in the world.

Similarly, Ling (2012) points out that fashion week has evolved from its traditional industry function of promoting a designer brand, it is a cultural strategy utilized by city planners and authorities to foster the growth of the national economy, foster a positive image of the city on a global stage, brand and rejuvenate a city, attract tourists, establish a global partnership, and a means of competitive struggle amongst post-industrialized cities. As Ling points out in her exploration of what she terms new rise fashion weeks, fashion week has turned into a "resource for economic drive serving both institutional and national agenda."[34] Also, Berry argues that with advances in new technologies, the rise of a new middle class and consumer markets, fashion weeks in emergent cities such as Jaipur, Jakarta, Beijing, Nairobi, and Moscow have destabilized the status of the traditional fashion capitals—Paris, London, New York, Milan, and Tokyo (Berry 2015; Ling 2012). For Skov (2006), the proliferation of fashion weeks outside the traditional capitals reflects its importance as an essential tool for upgrading an industry to establish the authorship of a designer and creative class in a region[35].

African nations play host to several fashion weeks.[36] Global cities such as Lagos, Cape Town, Dakar, and Congo have "a vested interest in being recognized as a place of creativity and aesthetics."[37] Fashion week is increasingly deployed by fashion practitioners in Africa to fulfil specific aims more than to be recognized as "author countries"[38] but also, to promote national design identity, and creative sectors, and attract investments and tourism.[39] It is also utilized as a means of participating in global cultural exchange and boosting Africa's image in the global economy. Fashion week fulfils other functions in addition to its economic aspects. For example, in her exploration of the import of fashion week in the multi-cultural and ethnic city of Sao Paulo, Ling argues that fashion week provides a space for creative support for the aesthetic expressions of the diverse ethnic communities in the region. The author argues that organizing fashion week in Sao Paulo involves mobilizing the local diverse communities, which not only fosters collaboration, but importantly strengthens social harmony, and local and national identity. Fashion weeks then broadly, present opportunities for brands to generate publicity, sell merchandise, establish connections and contacts, and networking opportunities for fashion industry practitioners (Kawamura 2018; Ling 2012; Skov 2006). When deployed by city planners and government, fashion plays a key role in promoting the national economic growth of a region. However, the importance of fashion week as a field-configuring device that brings together producers of fashion remains a defining feature of fashion.

As already mentioned, Nigeria plays host to several fashion week events, this is not surprising, because "unlike most of the types of production and commercial activities, fashion expresses a very elaborate culture, composed of symbols, ideologies and lifestyles."[40] Although these disparate events do not represent the image of a unified group, collectively they are social formations that contribute to projecting Nigeria's design identity and modern image to the outside world.

Nigeria: Historical and Cultural Context

Modern-day Nigeria is a resource-rich nation both in natural resources and human capital. Ethnically heterogeneous, it is home to over 200 million people, "the country is a conglomeration of hundreds of ethnic groups … with many different indigenous languages, historical memories, traditional lifestyle and social frameworks with roots reaching into the distant past."[41] Nigeria is comprised of over 500 ethnic groups, 4,000 languages, 36 states, and a federal capital, Abuja. The cosmopolitan city of Lagos, Nigeria's former capital, is considered the most populated city in Africa, attracting migrants, expatriates, returnees, and international businesses from around the world. The three largest major ethnic groups: Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa/Fulani occupy primary regions; the Yoruba in the Southwest (Ekiti, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Lagos), Igbo in the Southeast (Anambra, Abia, Imo, Ebonyi, and Enugu States), and Hausa/Fulani in the North (Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Taraba, Borno, Adamawa). These three ethnic communities are also spatially dispersed across other states coexisting with other minority groups. In terms of religious practices, Nigeria is a deeply religious society; Christianity, Islam, and animists, traditional religions, are widely practiced in Nigeria. The Northern region of Nigeria implements the Sharia (Islamic law) reflecting the large Muslim majority.[42] These characteristics, including regions, ethnicity, languages, and religion, suggest that Nigeria is a relatively complex and diverse nation[43]. The culture of Nigeria is internally varied and diverse, reflecting the diverse cultures that constitute the country[44]. This multicultural and multi-lingual character of the country suggests that the country is endowed with a rich cultural heritage, defined as the "sum total of the people's cherished arts, customs, festivals, sacred or worship sites, norms, values, ideologies, dress and dress patterns, traditional monuments & architectures, technology, and technological sites and other artefacts which are cherished and conserved for their historical, political, educational, recreational and religious significance among others."[45] This implies that Nigeria's rich cultural diversity is a positive force if properly wielded by the political elites to "promote collective consciousness in terms of unity, oneness, nationalism and fostering peaceful co-existence among Nigerians."[46]

However, national cohesion in Nigeria remains volatile due to the competing interests of its political ruling class and society.[47] For example, in her exploration of *Nigerian Beauty Pageants*, Balogun (2012) conceptualizes Nigeria as an emerging nation and argues that an emerging nation does not refer to "newly formed states (i.e., political units) but rather to newly developing nations (nations are characterized as having a shared sense of collective identity and affiliation) which are vying to become major players in the international arena."[48] This concept applies to the current subject of making fashion in Nigeria, partly because in the multi-ethnic plural Nigerian society, fashion brings together practitioners from varied social classes and ethnic backgrounds who are interdependent in their quest to position Nigeria as a major player in global fashion. They deploy fashion to express modernity and project an image of Nigerian creativity, in which the fashion week institution serves to legitimate designers' creativity. However, as Balogun argues in her study, Nigeria is the world's "seventh most populous country […] social divisions such as regional, religious and ethnic differences, and class dynamics of a local-based rising middle class, as well as a small but powerful super-elite[…], undergird competing gendered interpretations of nationalism."[49] The author's examination of two pageants within Nigeria reveals their diverging interests, visions, and different claims to national identity and femininity. While Miss Nigeria offered interpretations of Nigerian femininity grounded in traditions, the latter, originally known as Miss Universe, interprets Nigerian femininity in a more cosmopolitan internationalized way. Just as the beauty pageants are deployed to create a sense of nationhood, similarly, fashion in Nigeria plays a crucial role not only in the construction of Nigerian identity where group members see themselves as part of the larger Nigerian mosaic, but more importantly, ethnonational interpretations of nationalism and identities.

The creation of Nigeria in 1914 by the British colonial administration "imposed geo-political boundaries"[50] ignoring the regional, religious, and ethnic diversity and histories of the people who have existed in their locations for a long time. Falola maintains that the cobbling together of these disparate groups (sovereign nations) by colonial politics, "created a colonial marker that became a unit of political formation and competition for power."[51] Pre-colonialism, the people in the geographical space now known as Nigeria were comprised of a "multiplicity of kingdoms, empires, and communities with widely differing cultural, religious, linguistic, and governmental systems."[52] A reflection of British expansionism, the construction of Nigeria served not only to oppress, enslave and exploit the African peoples and resources but also created conditions for "competing nationalities such that in a country like Nigeria, the Hausa in the North may see themselves as different from the Igbo in the South."[53] To be sure, the Igbo as a group is comprised of many linguistic, cultural, and religious communities. As Alakija points out, these "categories of ethnicity, religion, and region have become the basis of Nigerian identities"[54] to identify themselves and create a basis for social formations and unity.[55] The import of ethnicity is explained by Arowosegbe, "ethnicity, connotes the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain an advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation."[56] Post-colonialism, the national tensions in Nigerian society remains political with the three largest ethnic groups vying for hegemony, power, influence, and control.

Within the context of Nigerian fashion, fashion week (AFWN) is utilized by Yoruba cultural intermediaries as an instrument for the preservation, restoration, and recognition of Yoruba traditional institutions in Ile Ife, the cradle of Yoruba history and identity[57]. For example, the Ooni of Ife (king of Ife) Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja 11, is a patron of the London and Nigerian versions of the Africa fashion week events. Since his acension to the throne in 2015, as the spiritual leader of the Yoruba people[58], numbering 44 million globally, the 51st Ooni of Ile-Ife through his various philanthropism, empowerment initiatives, and diplomatic activities in Yoruba communities in Yorubaland and Yoruba diaspora communities, has been described by the media as the "greatest Yoruba monarch modern Nigerian history ever produced."[59] The Ooni is most visible in front-row seating and on-stage at AFWN events. Also, at AFWN, Yoruba cultural intermediaries such as Olori Aderonke Ademiluyi-Oyewusi (Ooni's wife), Erelu Bisi Fayemi (Ekiti state first-lady), and other Yoruba state first ladies express Yoruba ethnonationalism, identity, and sensibilities through their fashion consumption practices and production narratives. Further, Yoruba fashion designers increasingly turn to their Yoruba cultural heritage in their design practices to produce stylish garments with a modern appeal. Thus, in the Nigerian context where they constitute a sub-national group, ethnicity has served as a basis for nationhood and continues to play a crucial role in the processes of internationalization and building of trans-ethnic networks[60] to establish and construct their versions of Nigerianness and a sense of belonging. Nigerian identity is multifaceted and negotiated through ethnic group memberships. For example, ethnic identity is mobilized, expressed, and materialized through the dress practices of Nigeria's disparate groups. In their exploration of Nigeria's textile, Aremu et al.[61] points out that each region Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa/Fulani specialize in different aspects of textile manufacturing, reinforcing the view that dress is a site of struggle for individuals and groups to fashion identities, stand out, and create a sense of belonging in an increasingly globalizing world.[62] This means Yoruba dress practices and tastes, differ from those preferred by the Hausa-Fulani Muslim states. At the federal level, Nigerian fashion is characterized by hybridity in the sense that people mix and match dress practices deriving from the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Asian, Western, etc. Among the Yoruba, the core components in the traditional dresses[63] are Iro

(Wrapper), Buba (blouse), gele (head tie), ipele (stole), and iborun (Shawl). Male Yoruba dress includes Sokoto (trouser), baba (tunic), agbada (a large, embroidered flowing over gown) and fila (cap).[64] There are variations in the Yoruba dress styles to express and convey social standing, gender, and customs. Contrary to Eurocentric beliefs that African dress styles are static[65], the observation that the Yorubas are fashionable people implies changes in their dress styles.[66] These changes occur and manifest in several ways, either in material culture: Aso oke, Adire, African prints, colors of the fabric, in dress forms to suit the time (asiko or Igba lo de). Adire and Aso oke are the two common fabrics indigenous to communities in Yorubaland. Adire describes the product and the process of cloth dyeing.[67] The Adire is considered ordinary cloth—*adi* meaning to tie (resist) and *re* refers to dye. In contrast, Aso Oke is the most culturally important Yoruba prestige textile. Traditionally hand-woven on a horizontal narrow loom that produces strips of cloth of few inches wide. The aso oke comes in many variations and carries different meanings amongst the Yorubas. As Bankole-Race points out, "In different communities in Yorubaland, the aso oke has taken on a significance far beyond a source of functional clothing, serving as a link between generations, families and societies, a key to the construction of group and individual identities."[68] This brief account of Yoruba dress practices illustrates that within the territorial Nigerian nation-state, the Yoruba dress practices are governed by different rule systems, as are the other ethnic groupings.

Ihonvbere (2000) points out that because the Nigerian political class is male-dominated, the "issues of gender equality and the particular plight of women"[69] were missing in the 1999 constitution. In other words, the constitution drafted by a male {under military rule} panel overlooked women's rights, gender disparity, justice, and women's contribution to the Nigerian economy, "Issues of property rights, especially inheritance rights, that have worked against women for decades are not addressed"[70] (Ihonvbere 2000:361). Similarly, in their analysis of gender representation in the Nigerian 1999 constitution, Ezeifeka and Osakwe point out that in the 166-page document, "no reference is made to the word 'woman.'"[71] Thus, the "biases and under-representation of the female gender in the constitution" permeates the civil society to shape attitudes toward women as well as the positions of women in society. The authors continue, "gender representation in the Constitution encodes the 'male-as norm' ideology, which has been described as a form of linguistic repression of the female gender."[72] Considering this, it becomes clear why AFWN employs fashion as an instrument of social change to raise awareness of women's contributions in the patriarchal Nigerian society. Nigerian civil society and private institutions along with international NGOs continue to champion women's rights, gender inequity, and justice because the Nigerian state has limited constitutional provisions for women[73]. Thus, fashion provides a lens through which Nigerian women, particularly the mediators at AFWN promote women's empowerment and wellbeing. Through these fashion-related practices, and as spokeswomen of Nigerian women, these fashion mediators raise awareness, offer support and mobilize the public and international organizations for social change. The Nigerian nation-state is continually being transformed by historic, internal dynamics and processes and external forces and globalization. These social transformations also shape the social interactions and behaviors of the populations and relations of power between the elites and the public, men, and women, rich and poor, educated and illiterate. The Nigerian sociocultural and historic contexts continue to shape our understanding of Nigeria's fashion systems, dominated by women and ethnonationalism. While Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa/Fulani fashion practitioners engage in routine interactions, ethnicity, kinship, language, and religion continue to play a crucial role in how Nigerianness is constructed and negotiated.

Africa Fashion Week Nigeria (AFWN)

Following the establishment of the London version of the same title, Africa fashion week London (AFWL) in 2011, AFWN debuted in Lagos in 2014 (see Table 16.1), founded by Princess Ronke Ademiluyi, a British-Nigerian fashion entrepreneur of Yoruba royal ancestry. She is the great-granddaughter of the Ooni Ajagun Ademiluyi, the King of Ife Kingdom from 1910–1930. In 2022, the Princess became (Queen) Olori Ademiluyi-Oyewusi.

AFWN emphasizes and prioritizes Nigerian fashion brands (Africa Fashion Week Nigeria 2022). Activities at the annual event range from runway shows, exhibitions, fashion industry awards, Business of Fashion Talk, design competitions, photography, art installations, fashion film, workshops, etc. Design practitioners and exhibitors/vendors are invited to apply to partake in event activities, while male and female fashion models (predominantly Black) are screened and selected through casting calls. The catwalk presentations feature mostly Nigeria-based fashion designers and brands comprising established design practitioners as well as emerging and upcoming student designers. Media practitioners: Fashion and newspaper editors, journalists, fashion bloggers, and photographers are accredited by the event management team to partake in event activities. Like the London version of the event, AFWN is attended by the consuming public, celebrities, socialites, dignitaries, government agency representatives, corporate sponsors, etc. in an elaborate, lush venue. In addition, AFWN's collaboration with a range of locally based individuals, firms, and organizations from across the cultural and creative industries reflects the collective taste in the production of Nigerian fashion culture within the Nigerian fashion system.

AFWN is a for-profit business organization with many functions. Foremost, fashion is utilized to mobilize fashion practitioners within the Nigerian fashion system to collectively contribute to the development of the local fashion economy and the creative class. As one component of the Nigerian fashion system, AFWN is internally focused, in that established and emerging Nigerian designers display clothing collections on the catwalk. This offers a critical starting point for an exploration of the social construction of Nigerian designer fashion, and the cultural intermediaries taking responsibility to legitimize Nigerian fashion designers and the modernization of indigenous textiles. This mobilization of the diverse fashion actors is a means of creating an organized method for spreading ideas about Nigerian designer fashion, designers, the Nigerian fashion industry, and fashion

Table 16.1 AFWN Locations in Nigeria

Year	*Month*	*Venue/location*
2014	May 17–18	Intercontinental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos
2015	May 23–24	Eko Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos
2016	July 1–3	Eko Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.
2017	June 3–4	National Arts Theatre, Surulere Lagos
2018	July 5–8	National Arts Theatre, Surulere Lagos
2019	December 20–21	Oriental Hotels, Lekki, Victoria Island
2020	December 5–12	Digital streaming
2021	December 4–5	Ojaja Arena, Ife Grand Resort, ile Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

brands to national and international audiences. Also, while the event mobilizes designers, its cultural focus is to develop a market and stimulate demands for ready-to-wear Nigerian African designer fashions through which these designers are promoted in the global marketplace. Fashion then serves the AFWN organization in its drive to foster a positive image of Nigerian-made fashions and design identity.

While AFWN is framed as Pan-African—that is, encompassing the whole of Africa and diasporas—the institutions, actors, and individuals are predominantly Nigerians and Yoruba. As is already mentioned, the socio-historical account of the formation of Nigeria, shapes and continues to influence the sociopolitical and economic landscape as well as the interactions in the diverse Nigerian context. As an expression and manifestation of Nigerian African fashion identity, the predominance of Yoruba cultural intermediaries, mostly women with a common agenda to promote Yoruba design traditions and clusters of highly skilled clothing producers in Yoruba states suggests the construction and articulation of a cosmopolitan Yoruba identity. For this paper, I focus on the Yoruba cultural intermediaries: The AFWN event founder, patrons, and matrons, who as gatekeepers of Nigerian fashion shape aesthetic tastes through their narratives of locally produced indigenous fabrics and women's empowerment.

Narratives of Sustainability, Empowerment, and Climate Change

AFWN is the title name of an event, "a platform that is designed for fresh and emerging designers who want exposure but do not have great finances to do other international shows or organize their own private show" (Africa Fashion Week Nigeria 2022). This means designers present their collections in fashion shows to an audience. As already mentioned, fashion week is an important economic and cultural activity, comprising activities such as—fashion shows and conferences. In this section, I want to focus on the seminar/conference and other nonvisible activities and practices as a component of fashion weeks. Thus, along with providing a publicity platform for emerging Nigerian fashion designers, the event also brings the voices of "established designers and other industry stakeholders in the industry" (Africa Fashion Week Nigeria 2022). AFWN serves as a connector and networking platform, for industry stakeholders to discuss issues: Women's empowerment and sustainable fashion practices, and highlight challenges, and opportunities within the Nigerian fashion industry. As already mentioned, regional and ethnic politics is one defining feature of Nigerian society, and this manifests in the production of fashion in Nigeria. The fact that Yoruba identity is a powerful source of meaning is reflected in the practices and activities of stakeholders such as the Ooni of Ife, Princess Ronke Ademiluyi, and the first ladies of Yoruba states at the AFWN event. These cultural mediators, who are predominantly elite and women through their discourse on indigenous Yoruba craftsmanship, women empowerment, sustainability, and climate change highlight challenges as well as solutions to address the challenges in Nigeria's fashion industry. As diffusion agents of contemporary Nigerian fashion and Yoruba cultural identities within the multi-ethnic Nigerian nation, I argue that these intermediaries and mediators are engaged in cultural identity politics. Ethnic identity, women's empowerment, and sustainable clothing production practices are narratives expressed and articulated by these Yoruba stakeholders who consciously promote and legitimate new fashion dress styles through which African culture and heritage are preserved. Perhaps the most visible evidence of the role of fashion in cultural politics and Yoruba nationalism is reflected in the role of the AFWN event as a launching pad for the various regional activities and causes: Child abuse, women's empowerment, unemployment, philanthropic programmes initiated and supported by key elite Yoruba stakeholders. For example, in 2018, the AFWN event served as the launching pad for the Ojaja Fashion Institute (OFI), a fashion design vocational training program to empower Nigerian youths and curb unemployment. The launch was attended by Nigerian socialites, politicians, royalty, and dignitaries—predominantly Yorubas. The relevance of this is that unemployment is endemic in Nigeria, particularly in the rural areas.

The training institute based in lle Ife city in Osun state is funded by the Ooni of Ife and coordinated by AFWN founder Olori Aderonke Ademiluyi-Oyewusi, who remarks in a media report "Ooni is concerned about the well-being of his people, meeting their numerous needs per time and contributing immensely to the upgrade of culture and values of Yoruba and Africa at large. The tentacle of his magnanimity has touched all and sundry—infants, youths and the aged, through some initiatives, one of which is being celebrated today" (Vanguard Nigeria 2018). This narrative account reflects activities and actions taken by some Yoruba people to reinforce the relevance of the Ooni (paramount Yoruba ruler) in contemporary Nigeria.[74] A responsible leader is one that protects and cares for the well-being of his people. More importantly, it shows the contradictions and tensions between the democratic system adopted by the Nigerian state and the traditional Yoruba institution. Olori Aderonke emphasises that the Yorub monarch enacts his obligation and responsibility within his regional territory (although it might extend to other places of Yoruba settlement) tackling issues: Employment, lack of training for the youth, etc that have suffered from neglect by the state and federal government. The role of Yoruba kingship institution is extensive involving local, national and international politics[75] despite argument of their relevance in contemporary Nigerian society and demographic governance.[76]

Another example of how the issues of Yoruba identity, gender, politics, and "industry politics … surrounding issues of production, distribution, and consumption of fashion"[77] in Nigeria play out at AFWN can be seen in the narratives of Yoruba First Ladies as mediators between local Yoruba artisans and the consumers. For example, media coverage of the AFWN seminar in 2019 in which the AFWN ambassador and the First Lady of Ekiti state, Erulu Bisi Fayemi, proposed that the federal government place an embargo on imported textiles has generated extensive attention and narratives about the expected role of the government in the economy. According to the first lady, the ban on imported Aso-oke from China[78] signifies an expression of protection of the Nigerian textile sector which will foster sustainable economic growth. The traditional textiles of Yoruba local communities maintained and sustained by women's labor have not attracted state investment and support. They "do not have the capacity to produce to scale, instead of investing in that capacity, we are acquiring a situation that others are coming to rip off our intellectual property."[79]

This remark by an industry stakeholder—not an elected official but the wife of the governor of the Yoruba state Ekiti directs attention to the decline of local indigenous textile production of the Aso-oke, which she attributes to importation and market liberalization. In the 1980s, the Nigerian textile industry once the third largest in Africa was the "largest employer of labor in the country," Olutayo and Akanle point out that "smuggling of imported textiles into the country, high cost of production, weak exchange rates, energy crises and very low patronage" are among the challenges that have contributed to the decline of the Nigerian textile industry.[80] In other words, the lack of equitable and effective state governance has created conditions for the decline of the industry. More importantly, the AFWN ambassador/matron shows the importance of the clothing economy in the lives of women and how macro-environmental processes have hindered and impeded the tacit knowledge derived from indigenous practices to make a living. To be sure, in his study assessing the performance and contributions of the indigenous textile (aso-oke) industry, Atanda (2015) examines individual entrepreneurs in Iseyin Oyo state, an ancient town popularly known as the hometown of aso oke."[81] The author explains that the labor-intensive aso oke economy is characterized by clusters and networks of small-scale businesses run by semi-literate entrepreneurs, employing skilled workers: Weavers, unpaid workers—and family members in the production of the cloth. Although the production of traditional cloth is a household business, it makes significant contributions to creating local employment and generating income for the local economy. Also, the authors found that "the industry operated at less than full capacity,"[82] which they attribute to consumer interests and enabling environment, rather than the producer's capacity to produce. In other words, the environment—governance structures, economic policies, and public interest—patriotism are prerequisites for the survival of the indigenous textile economy. While the state has failed in its responsibilities—such as providing employment, market, social amenities, and security, the people have deployed creative means to ensure economic survival. The author advocates for government intervention, arguing that the "policy programmes of government should be directed towards discouraging the use of imported clothing materials such as head ties and other expensive clothing materials. This will help to direct consumers' taste towards the use of locally made cloths, including aso-oke."[83] The call for government protection of the local industry against external competitors—Asia and Euro-America is not unique to Africa or Nigeria. As Rovine points out, "European colonial powers viewed their colonies as ready markets for their products including textiles and clothing."[84] Thus, this call for protectionism should be viewed from a historic perspective, because it is the continuation of historic conditions and forces, whereby Western nations through the monopolization and organization of production and markets protected their economies against competition from the colonies[85]—mostly emerging developing nations such as Nigeria. The colonial governments protected their national economies from external competition in other to foster economic growth and a sense of nationhood. Today, Euro-American and Asian companies dominate and control a significant share of the consumer markets—clothing, textiles, etc. Despite the increasing global interconnection of the world's economies, Western multinational firms and businesses dominate and control a significant market share of the textile and clothing industries.[86]

Historically, the academic study of fashion was considered trivial due to its association with women and appearance.[87] Increasingly, scholarship on the subject has expanded because fashionable clothing is more than physical appearance, there is a whole economic and cultural rationalization behind the practice[88]. In their exploration of women's entrepreneurial activities in Lagos, Ogundana et al.[89] point out that in the female-led and women-dominated Nigerian fashion industry, entrepreneurial activities—informal activities such as sewing and making clothes, provide opportunities for a significant reduction in the number of child trafficking, prostitution, crime, and improved living conditions of women. Fashion clothing practice is seen not only as a cultural practice and expression of cultural heritage but also as an important socio-economic instrument that can transform local and regional communities. Because small-scale artisans, particularly women are at the forefront of the production of Aso Oke, stakeholders recognize that the neglect of the sector by the government has obstructed and stagnated the potential to modernize the craft skills and the development and continuity of hand-woven clothing practice, despite its economic role in the well-being of local women artisans. The cultural significance of the aso oke also known as Aso Ofi is that it is "an integral element of the historic and cultural landscape of the Yoruba, representing social status as well as national identity."[90] Aso Oke refers to cloth made and worn by the Yoruba people, it symbolizes honor and finesses. Although historically local to the Yoruba of the Oke Ogun area in Oyo state (Abeokuta), who were commercial merchants, the cloth rapidly proliferated across other Yoruba regions. Today, Aso-oke is worn by Yoruba men and women throughout southwestern Nigeria: Ekiti, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Lagos, as well as other regions in Nigeria with Yoruba populations: Kwara, Kogi, and Edo States.[91] Importantly, hand-woven cloth of high status originally worn by the aristocracy and elites, and indigenous to Yoruba craftsmanship is now industrially produced in China and elsewhere and distributed to consumers in Africa and the diaspora.

While the first lady calls for the protection of Nigeria's indigenous textile sector, other Yoruba cultural intermediaries such as Princess Ronke Ademiluyi and the Ooni of Ife, seek to preserve another common Yoruba textile practice—the hand-dyed textile known as Adire. Adire refers to indigo-dyed cotton cloth designed in different colors traditionally made and worn by Yoruba women: Used as wrappers and wrappers and covering cloth. In 2019, the Adire Oodua Textile Hub (AOTH) was established in Ile Ife Osun State, described as a "Resource and educational facility dedicated to the preservation of the traditional techniques of Adire textile manufacturing. The hub raises awareness and understanding of the sustainability of Adire production through creative educational programmes for adults and children" (Adire Odua 2021). Adire as a distinctive textile type first emerged in the city of Abeokuta and was increasingly diffused by Yoruba practitioners, traders, and consumers across Nigeria. To be sure, although Adire production and practice vary and are widespread across Nigeria.[92] By institutionalizing Adire the AOTH aims not only to revive the indigenous local textile economy but also to preserve cultural heritage through the professionalization and modernization of Adire textile production techniques. The location of the AOTH in Osun State is also crucial to the place-making of the Yorubaland as the center of innovation, alongside the Yoruba city Abeokuta in Ogun state.[93] For example, the Nike Center for Art & Culture in Lagos offers training and workshop on the art of indigo-dyed Adire fabrics. This is touted as a means of inspiring Nigerian women to be self-sufficient in the face of the constraining socio-economic Nigerian society.[94] The involvement of a Yoruba princess and the Ooni of Ife in the founding of the Ile Ife textile hub, implies these cultural intermediaries add value and prestige to Adire clothing production and consumption. Most importantly, the discussion above has shown, that the emergence of the Yoruba aso-oke and adire are attributed to different Yoruba communities. In this sense, the AOTH is an instrument for fostering unity among the Yoruba people across the Yoruba regions in Nigeria. The evidence for this conclusion is reflected in the configuration of relationships, for example, professional artisans provide guidance on the various processes involved in the production of Adire. In contrast to the mass industrialized clothing production system, the Hub expands its understanding of Adire techniques: Marbling, tie and dye, wax resist, screen printing, and batik, from its orientation as a family practice to an "innovative entrepreneurial craft."[95]

The historical account of the development of the textile varies. For example, in his examination of Adire production in Yoruba land, Zakaree writes that "Adire textiles which, is the indigo-dyed cloth is an integral part of the culture and cultural heritage of the people of Egba kingdom (Ogun state) in southwestern Nigeria. It is the major local craft by the women who use a variety of resist dye techniques in their entrepreneurial and artistic efforts, to produce various designs of Adire textile for both the local and national market."[96] In other words, Adire production is a cultural expression of Yoruba identity as well as a means of economic survival for Yoruba women in Ogun state. In contrast, in their examination of the role of indigenous textiles in tourism development in Nigeria, Bamidele and Gbolahan (2014) note the overlapping roles of female artisans as consumers and producers in Osogbo, Osun state. In Yorubaland, Osogbo is a town renowned for the mass production of batik-adire. The authors argue that the production of indigenous or traditional textiles, defined as locally produced textiles involving traditional (local) methods perceived to have emanated from or are native to that area, provides economic and psychosocial benefits for the practitioners. Economically, it generates employment opportunities, while psychosocially it is an aesthetic and creative expression of the cultural heritage of the people because "Indigenous textiles are mainly handcrafted with symbolic meanings and aesthetic qualities."[97] These Yoruba practitioners demonstrate their creative ingenuity because Adire textile production involves "motif and intricate design which is visible in the balanced symmetrical arrangement in the textile."[98] These views suggest that adire production is a craft practiced across Yorubaland, mostly by women. Bamidele and Gbolahan attribute the high percentage of women in the vocation (dyeing) as reflective of cultural continuity and preservation - the skills have been passed down from mother to daughter as an "inheritance."[99] This suggests textile production in Yorubaland serves multiple roles—economic, social, and cultural reinforcement of identities.

The dress and design practices of Yoruba cultural intermediaries beyond the AFWN event setting illustrate the broader cultural economy of Nigerian fashion in which the fashion industry—cloth and clothing production, and fashion system—the production and diffusion of fashion as a symbolic object are intertwined. On the one hand, these female intermediaries recognize the import of textile production as a tool for women's economic empowerment, through which the living conditions of women can be elevated through their creative practice and labor. As Bankole-Race points out "in contemporary Nigeria, women dictate and influence fashion trends, and at the same time ensure that traditional hand-woven clothing is always a part of the Yoruba fashion."[100] Beyond their localized uses in religious and traditional rituals such as in the Masquerade traditions, the Adire and aso-oke are established fashionable material objects evidencing their visibility in designer clothing collections, DIY and mass production, and "across ethnic, religious and geographical boundaries."[101] On the other hand, the production of fashion as a symbolic object is evident in the emphasis on the regional, and national identities of the textiles and cloth producers. Through their various promotional activities, embodied practices, and narratives, Yoruba cultural intermediaries imbue meanings on these textiles to enhance Yoruba identities. As already mentioned, the liberalization of the Nigerian market, the absence of infrastructure, and government support are some of the challenges hindering the development of the Nigerian fashion industry. The implication of this is that individuals and private companies across regions in Nigeria employ various strategies to promote and communicate their design practices. As already mentioned, fashion week is a space for the creative support of the aesthetic expressions of diverse ethnic communities (Ling 2012). Yoruba cultural intermediaries contribute to societal change by shifting and shaping the perceptions of local indigenous textiles through the fashion week platform. As a key medium of fashion promotion and communication, the fashion week event, widely diffused via digital media technologies offers a medium for transforming the meanings of these textiles from their associations with rural aesthetics and traditions to a global fashion commodity.

This standpoint of promoting locally made fabrics: Adire and Aso oke—two common Yoruba fabrics relate to the notion of sustainability in many ways. In contrast to the ethical trade movement which calls for fair pricing and equity between the West and African producers. Yoruba cultural fashion intermediaries seek to promote local artisans comprised of small-scale production and to modernize Yoruba clothing production techniques through which local artisans—particularly women can reap economic and psychological benefits. As Fletcher and Grose (2012) argue, sustainability in the fashion industry can be achieved by turning the economic-driven, mass production-obsessed industrial model into an ecologically friendly one[102] characterized by "small-scale production, traditional craft techniques, local materials and markets."[103] This concept of slow fashion as an alternative production model, Fletcher argues offers consumers and producers "more control over institutions and technologies that affect their lives."[104] In the context of clothing production and consumption, sustainability, working conditions for clothing workers, climate change, mass production, labor organization, clothing production techniques that use toxic chemicals, and consumerism are among the key concerns raised by various stakeholders within and outside the globalized fashion industry in the twenty-first century. Within the Nigerian fashion system, issues of sustainability, women's empowerment and employment, and preservation of indigenous craft heritage are lauded by various practitioners as pivotal to economic growth and development.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored Nigerian fashion as an institutionalized system through which changes in clothing styles and dress are systematically introduced by those with the influence and authority to do so (Kawamura 2018). Within the Nigerian fashion system characterized by variations in ethnic, cultural, regional, and social identities, AFWN constitutes one key component, introducing new styles and shaping the contemporary image of society. AFWN thus serves not only to promote beautiful designer garments but also to foster an acceptance and recognition of the importance of preserving local Yoruba textile economy. Technological advancement and globalization have presented opportunities for Nigerian and Yoruba fashion practitioners to disseminate information, knowledge, and images of Yoruba textiles to audiences across the world. At the same time, the liberalization of the Nigerian market, culture of importation, consumer orientation, preference for foreign luxury brands, and the lack of infrastructure are among the challenges of making and producing fashion in Nigeria.

Notes

1 Fletcher and Grose, S*ustainability and fashion*, 1
2 Adire Oodua, *About Us*
3 Kawamura, *Fashion-ology*, 42.
4 Andersen and Taylor, *Sociology*, 128
5 Kawamura, *Fashion-ology, 73.*
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17 Cultural Heritage, Intangible Assets, and Fashion Branding

Carlo Marco Belfanti

Introduction

Fashion belongs to the group of activities that recent literature in economics has classified as "Creative industries,"[1] "Cultural industries,"[2] or, yet again, "Cultural and creative industries," which is the definition given by Unesco, thus: "Those sectors of organized activity that have as their main objective the production or reproduction, the promotion, distribution or commercialization of goods, services, and activities of content derived from cultural, artistic or heritage origins."[3] It is precisely the link between the production activity of the fashion sector and cultural heritage,[4] highlighted in the definition adopted by Unesco, that is the object of this chapter, which intends to analyze how tangible and intangible cultural heritage entered into the brand identity strategies of the fashion business.

The first section reconstructs how, between the middle of the nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, *couturiers* and fashion designers were able to achieve the status of artists, as well as accrediting the product of their creative activity as an expression of artistry:[5] Identity building, interaction with artistic movements, and patronage were the instruments used to reach this aim. The second part of the chapter illustrates how, strengthened by the recognition obtained by *haute couture* from the second half of the nineteenth century onward, the fashion houses were able to use their cultural heritage as an asset in promoting their own image: Emblematic in this respect is the case of fashion *made in France* and *made in Italy*. France and Italy are the countries that, more than any others, may boast of a consolidated primacy at international level together with an indisputable reputation in the field of fashion—a reputation that, indeed, has become one of the distinctive traits of a national cultural identity, as well as an economic one. For this reason, this chapter is focused on the French and Italian experiences. The third section of the chapter presents the way in which the French and Italian fashion houses used their own history, at times manipulating it, to reinforce their brand identities thanks to accrued creativity and know-how. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

Fashion as Art

It all started in Paris with Charles Frederick Worth, the *couturier* considered to be the founder of Parisian *haute couture*. Paris had already been recognized as the European capital of women's fashion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it was the English *couturier* Worth who laid the foundations for the standing of Paris as world

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capital of women's fashion, introducing epoch-making changes that were to open up new horizons for tailoring and make the Parisian *ateliers* the crucible of elegance. With Worth, a new phase in the history of fashion began, in which governance of the system became the purview of the Parisian *maisons*, led by the great names of high-level women's tailoring, who dictated the canons of elegance in an authoritarian and undisputable manner. Worth created the basis for this new form of organization, introducing a series of innovations that set the tone for those who followed. The first, and perhaps the most important, among these innovations was the reversal of the relationship between tailor and client. In the fashion business of the preceding centuries the tailor was a mere artisan, from whom technical competence but not creativity was required: Tailor carried out their work according to the directions given by clients, who, in the case of the wealthy classes, were perfectly *au fait* with evolutions in taste. Otherwise, the tailors operated as subordinates in the employ of *merciers*, *marchandes des modes* and *modistes*, who were recognized as the principal interpreters of current trends. The success of Worth was the success of the tailor, whose rise, on the one hand, limited the other professional figures to an ancillary role, and, on the other, up-ended the relationship with the clientele, which now found itself in a subordinate position to the tailor. Furthermore, an aspect that should not be underemphasized is that high fashion for women had become a business in the hands of male tailors.[6] It is worth highlighting how such a change in perspective was thought out extremely lucidly and pursued with great determination, as testified to by the way in which Worth described his way of working: "My job … is not just a matter of performing, but above all of inventing. The creation is the secret of my success. I do not want people to order their dresses. If I did, I would lose half of my business."[7]

The requalification of the tailor's function—from the anonymous *tailleur* to the feted *couturier*—was accompanied in the process of re-elaboration of women's fashion, and could be no less so, by the legitimization of this figure through the construction of a high social profile. The *couturier* was a craftsman who placed his creative genius at the service of female elegance, inventing compositions and solutions that were unique: Was not fashion a form of art and therefore could the *couturier* too not be considered an artist on the same level as painters, sculptors, poets, and novelists? Talent, creativity, and genius were the gifts that, from the mid-century on, were to distinguish the successful *couturier* or, rather, the fashion artist. Emblematic in this context is the famous photographic portrait that Félix Nadar made of Worth in 1892, at the height of his fame: The founder of *Haute Couture* is immortalized dressed as an artist, a garb that has been rightly defined as "Rembrandt-style": That is, with a velvet beret on his head, his shoulders wrapped in a soft cape in luxurious material, a floppy cravat tied with studied *nonchalance* around his neck.[8] His aspiration—which, incidentally, hit the mark—to be compared to an artist did not, however, fail to draw critical attention from his contemporaries and there were those who sarcastically commented on his ambition. Hyppolite Taine, for example, turned to pungent irony in portraying the well-established *couturier*:

> This little being, skinny, black, nervous, receives [his customers] in a velvet jacket, superbly lying on a sofa with a cigar hanging out of his mouth. He tells them: "walk, turn around; well; come back in ten days, I'll create the outfit suited for you". They are not the ones who are choosing, it's him (…). To those who are amazed, he says: "I'm a great artist, I master the palette of Delacroix and I create. An outfit is valuable as a painting."[9]

If Worth had transformed the production chain of women's high fashion and his disciples had institutionalized the system, it was with Paul Poiret that Parisian *haute couture* made another great leap in quality on its way to the definitive consecration of the couturier–artist. Poiret held that fashion was an integral part of the artistic culture of the period and, as such, was one of the contemporary forms of aesthetic sensibility. Profoundly impressed by the Viennese experience of the Wiener Werkstätte, which was inspired by the principle of communion among the various forms of art, in which the decorative arts and fine arts had equal dignity, Poiret was convinced that the creation of garments fell within the field of what he himself called "the luxury industry," together with products of refined design such as furniture, wall hangings, elegant tableware, lamps, and so on. If Worth's "artistic ambitions" had elicited some ironic comments, then Poiret's declaration to a journalist from *L'Excelsior*—"We are artists doing business"[10]—must not have astonished anyone. This was an idea that found full expression in his autobiography: "Since I've always loved the painters, I feel at ease with them. It seems to me that we do the same job and that we are workmates."[11]

Octave Uzanne, a careful observer of all that occurred within the world of Parisian high fashion, wrote thus of the great Parisian *couturiers*: "The *couturier* has become the master, the almighty arbiter of elegance of the grandes dames. And these men are or have been great artists!"[12] Within a few decades, from Worth to Poiret, the transformation of the tailor into an artist could be said to be complete and irreversible,[13] as is confirmed by Didier Grumbach: "Recognized as a full artist, the *couturier*, from anonymous artisan, gains the status of creator and can sign his creations."[14]

In the years intervening between the two world wars, one of the many intuitions of Paul Poiret was developed: the relationship between Parisian high fashion and contemporary artistic movements that went well beyond patronage and collectionism.[15] The relationship between the *couturiers/couturières* and the artistic avant-garde of the time had become ever more intense, on the one hand an expression of an ambition never laid to rest on the part of *haute couture* to find its place on Parnassus and, on the other, a sign, perhaps, of its anxiety to take part in the thrill of "modernity." Chanel moved in the same circles as the cosmopolitan artistic community that lived in Paris and collaborated with Picasso and Cocteau in the making of theatrical costumes. Madeleine Vionnet was interested in the Cubist and Futurist movements and profited from the collaboration of the Italian Futurist Ernesto Michahelles. Elsa Schiaparelli—defined by her rival Gabrielle Chanel as that "*artiste italienne qui fait des vêtements*"[16]—found a source of inspiration in Surrealism, including in her collection garments designed by Cocteau and Dalì.[17]

The interest of the *couturiers* in the artistic avant-garde was mutual: If, on the one hand, the former aspired to be recognized as artists, on the other, exponents of the latter were attracted to the innovative expressive possibilities offered by fashion.[18] Such reciprocal attention materialized even far from Paris, as in Italy with the provocative experimentation of the Futurists[19] or in Soviet Russia with the "revolutionary" proposals of Constructivism.[20]

The construction of an identity carried out during the decades of the golden age of Parisian *haute couture* was not halted by the profound transformations in French fashion after World War II and the affinity between fashion and art continued to be a central point of reference in the definition of the status of a fashion designer. This was clearly underlined by Christian Dior in one of the conferences held at the Sorbonne, who took up concepts already expressed by Worth and Poiret: "If a *couturier* today is talking to you about his job, it's that his profession turned from craftmanship to artistic creation."[21] In exactly the same way, the "contamination" between art and fashion continued: Among the best-known examples are the collections by Yves Saint Laurent inspired by the works of Piet Mondrian (the Mondrian dress) or the pop art of Andy Warhol.[22] The existence of a strict link between art and fashion is by now conventional wisdom:[23] The digital project "Arts and Culture," besides offering a section entitled "How fashion meets culture," emphasizes the cultural identity of the fashion phenomenon thus—"We wear culture."[24]

Cultural Heritage as an Intangible Asset

Despite the fact that the accreditation of designers as artists came about largely thanks to the Parisian *couturiers*, the idea that fashion is a cultural product[25]—"We wear culture"—has become a concept shared with fashion houses in other countries, as well as a resource for communication.[26] This perspective has been shown to be particularly important for the two countries in which the best-known "fashion systems" have arisen[27]—that is, France, obviously, and Italy, in which ample recourse has been made, albeit in diverse ways, to the "*patrimoine*" or "cultural heritage"[28] as a tool in promoting national fashion production in the context of the "country of origin effect."[29]

In the case of France, a centuries-old history of undisputed international domination in the field of women's fashion—from the time of the Sun King to *haute couture*—-represents an extraordinary stock of reputation, an intangible asset for French fashion.[30] The pivotal role of Paris and its collocation in the luxury range—*haut de gamme*[31]—are its identifying characteristics, the fruit of the long historical sedimentation of the French fashion system, which in the second half of the twentieth century found itself facing the challenge offered by the arrival of *prêt-à-porter* and the need to shift from a craftsman organization of production to an industrial one, without, however, betraying the cultural heritage of its own identifying capital. The solution adopted was that of developing an intermediate way between the obsolete *haute couture* and mass production: a solution based on an industrial *prêt-à-porter* that incorporated the typical signs of good taste and refined elegance that were a part of the cultural heritage of French fashion.[32]

The type of resources based on the cultural heritage ("*patrimoine*") that French fashion had at its disposal have been analyzed with great precision.[33] This concerns, above all, the know-how of an artisanal character specializing in the production of luxury, created from the production organization established by the fashion houses of *haute couture*. A decisive role was played by that culture of creativity whose evolution was fostered by the concentration of creative activity in the area of Paris. The creativity of French fashion designers is often represented as being produced by the Parisian cultural context and, more particularly, by "*l'esprit parisien*."[34] It was such a context that allowed for the accumulation on the part of the *Maisons* of a heritage of research and experimentation in the field of fashion design, which was fostered both by the forms of interaction/competition among the *couturiers* and by the cross-pollination between fashion and artistic movements.[35] A third resource that merits mention is the cultural sharing of good taste: That culture of taste which has long dominated the international scene and is the element that the various Parisian fashion designers have in common beyond the particular stylistic signature each of them has. The last, but not least, important resource contained in the treasure chest of the cultural heritage of French fashion is that of institutional support, which has operated both at a political level, with the support of the state, and at an associative level, through the *Chambre syndicale de la couture parisienne*.

The cultural heritage specific to the fashion sector—fruit of an evolution whose origins go back to the days of the Sun King and which reached its full potential under *haute couture*—in the last two decades of the twentieth century became the base onto which the establishment of French specialization in the industry of luxury goods was grafted. This also comprises, beyond clothing in the strictest sense, a vast range of accessories—a kind of fashion system—that also includes other sectors such as cosmetics and perfume production, the food and wine industries, and furnishing.[36] Corporate holdings such as LVMH and Kering and companies such as Hermès and Chanel, which hold a dominant position in the luxury economy at the global level, have consolidated and reinforced the relationship between art and fashion—driven by the "art–celebrity–fashion nexus" envisioned by Andy Warhol—laying the foundations for a renewed version of the cultural heritage: "Through artistic co-branding initiatives and high-profile itinerant exhibitions re-interpreting the codes and values of the luxury brand, the consolidated financial power of Paris fashion has helped forge a new image of France in the early twenty-first century."[37] This is an evolution that finds confirmation in the programme by the *Comité Colbert*, an important French association of luxury companies founded in 1954 with the following mission:

> The idea was simple: rekindle the desire for French *art de vivre* after years of war and deprivation by bringing together, on an equal footing, the big names from various artistic métiers embodying French genius and ingenuity. This association was to be a forum for meeting peers, exchanging ideas, and reflecting on elements specific to the luxury industry.

The mission was updated thus: "Initially dedicated to fashion, tableware, perfume and cosmetics, the association then opened its doors to cultural institutions and prestigious art institutions in order to better promote France's image worldwide."[38] Between the 1980s and 2020, the valorization of a historically determined cultural heritage has been integrated with the prospect of its enrichment through an ever closer interaction between luxury business and artists with the aim of continuing to enhance the global competitiveness of "the essence of style"[39] Made in France.

Likewise, the establishment on the international market of the production specializations that make up the range of goods Made in Italy[40] (otherwise known as the three Fs: fashion, food, furniture)—and which were in competition with the Made in France productions—began with fashion and pivoted around their own cultural heritage, albeit in a completely different manner from the French model.

Italian fashion was born in 1951 and could not count on the authority in the field of good taste that Parisian *haute couture* had acquired worldwide, and which represented the principal competitor. Italy had able craftsmen available, but did not have any form of intangible cultural heritage to balance against that of *haute couture*. Italy, which in the centuries of French splendor (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) had slipped to the margins of European economy and culture, and which, in more recent times, had been identified with a dictatorship that shared responsibility for World War II, had to find a source of cultural reputation at international level and could do no better than hark back to the Renaissance, the period that had produced a cultural heritage known and admired all over the world. The Renaissance—or rather the myth of the Renaissance constructed in the course of the nineteenth century[41]—gave Italian fashion a powerful instrument for cultural legitimization at an international level.

In the period between the two world wars the attention with which the specialist press, particularly American, considered Italy as the home of refined taste could already be noted, anticipating that which in 1951 would become the leitmotiv of the storytelling[42] on Made in Italy: That is, the Renaissance as a source of inspiration. From the second half of the nineteenth century this passion for the Renaissance, as the golden age of artistic taste, and for Italy, which was its cradle, had made the U.S. élites enthusiastic.[43] It is therefore not surprising that *Women's Wear Daily*, the retailers' daily newspaper, offered diverse examples of how the art of the Renaissance could offer various creative stimuli to the fashion houses.[44]

With the end of World War II the Italian fashion sector rapidly gained international visibility, thanks to fashion designers who were much appreciated by American consumers. In 1947 the image of Italian creativity was relaunched when Salvatore Ferragamo was awarded the prestigious Neiman Marcus Award. It was, however, probably Emilio Pucci who emerged as the best-known and most appreciated of the Italian fashion designers in the USA.[45] The American press illustrated the reawakening of creativity that characterized the Italian economic recovery in the second half of the 1940s as a new Renaissance. An article on Italy published in 1947 by *Fortune* said: "Today the inventive, productive tradition is still lively. It may once again bring rebirth to the land of the Renaissance."[46] In March 1950 Alice K. Perkins, correspondent for *Women's Wear Daily*, illustrated the creations of diverse fashion houses to the American retailers, presenting them as the heirs to a craft tradition "of skilled workers since the great days of the Renaissance."[47] This was the statement that introduced the storytelling destined to intertwine with the representation of a natural Italian inclination to refined taste constructed around the "myth" of the Renaissance:[48] The storytelling of the continuity between Renaissance craftsmanship and the Italian fashion designers.

It was a Florentine entrepreneur, Giovanni Battista Giorgini, who launched the first Italian fashion show in 1951, which is generally considered as hailing the birth of Italian fashion,[49] connecting fashion and art under the aegis of the Renaissance and inventing the "myth of continuity." Giorgini invited the buyers and the specialist American press already in Europe to attend the presentation of the Parisian collections to prolong their stay to include a trip to Florence, where they could attend a fashion show of Italian models. The initiative had to overcome considerable obstacles before achieving success; the two most important of these were the need to both overcome the Americans' perplexity regarding the suggestion that they travel all the way from Paris to see a collection that could not boast any great credentials and obtain the collaboration of the Italian fashion houses, which had trouble in comprehending the sense and potential importance of the event. In the end, thanks to his far-flung, excellent personal contacts, Giorgini managed to convince a good number of the American representatives and to overcome the diffidence of the majority of the most important fashion houses.

The first appointment was set for Florence on February 12, 1951, at Villa Torrigiani, Giorgini's own home. He knew how to exploit the Florentine context to the full in order to set the event firmly in the mould of Renaissance tradition: In the material distributed to the journalists and buyers invited to the first showing, it was explicitly stated that "the Italian collections, for the first time brought to the attention of the world, recall in their line, in their cut, and in their ease of wear the legacy of the artistic tradition of the Renaissance."[50] The Renaissance was presented not only as the golden age of Italian civilization, but also as the period in which artistic genius placed itself at the service of elegance, thus allowing Italy to dictate to Europe in terms of fashion. The fashion houses that took part in the show were none other than the heirs of such supremacy. Giorgini, therefore, proposed an idea of continuity far more ambitious than that referring to craft know-how or to the artistic tradition: He was in fact suggesting that Italian fashion descended from a Renaissance culture of fashion that had been dominant and that was the product of artists of the caliber of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. This assertion contained only a minimum of historic truth, but was revealed to be an extremely effective marketing tool. The show was a success: Italian fashion had become an international reality and Florence was its capital.[51]

In the following two decades the Italian "fashion system" underwent numerous radical changes both organizational and regarding production.[52] In respect of its small-scale artisan dimension in the 1950s, the idea of *prêt-à-porter* increasingly gained ground—that is, industrial production that needed a new type of fashion designer, the stylist, able to combine creative innovation with the requirements of production on a vast scale—while Florence lost its role as Italian fashion capital to Milan, capital of the *prêt-à-porter*, and to Rome, the seat of high fashion.[53]

Through the advertising published in *Women's Wear Daily* in support of the entire "fashion system" it is possible to trace the progressive reinforcement of the sense attributed to the idea of Made in Italy. The page dedicated to the presentation of women's fashion for the Spring–Summer collection of 1999 adopted a consolidated communicative register, proposing the reproduction of a detail from a Renaissance painting under an unequivocal title: "The essence of Italy."[54] But, in 2002, a campaign entitled "Italia: Life in 'I' style" was launched that translated the idea of Made in Italy into an even wider meaning of the Italian lifestyle:

> One of the primary goals of this campaign is to introduce consumers to the best of the Italian lifestyle, particularly through its rich assortment of fine products. Since U.S. metropolitan areas have more exposure to "things Italian," the key target is to reach further into the American heartland and spread "*la dolce vita*."[55]

In the meantime, in 2001, the narration regarding Made in Italy found its full cultural legitimization with the creation of a great exhibition in Milan, in the *Palazzo della Triennale*, which celebrated precisely half a century of the history of the idea of Made in Italy, whose birth was identified as having been on that fateful day of February 12, 1951, when the first Italian fashion show was held in Florence. The Milan exhibition was focused on both fashion and design furniture for more than one reason: Both sectors held—and still hold to this day—a primary role in Italian exports; both sectors are design-driven; both represent "the highest product of our culture." But the context of the evolution of Made in Italy towards the concept of the Italian lifestyle also includes contributions from "*La dolce vita*, Parmesan cheese, Solaia wine and those bright red cars from Maranello."[56]

France and Italy are the countries whose "country of origin effect" is recognized globally with reference to a range of products that are, in effect, somewhat similar, and which identify a particular lifestyle—in a word, luxury for France, "*Dolce vita*" for Italy. In both cases, the construction of this image began with fashion and was then extended to other production sectors, albeit with a diverse chronology: In France starting from the mid-nineteenth century, but after World War II for Italy. In both cases cultural heritage represented a resource that was of fundamental importance—a true intangible asset—in conquering the international market: As far as France is concerned, this is the heritage of know-how, creativity, and institutions accumulated by *haute couture*, while for Italy it was the invention of continuity with the Renaissance that granted the emerging—but as yet unknown—Italian fashion a cultural "pedigree." In both cases, too, the accrediting of fashion as a form of art was fundamental, from the initiatives of the *couturiers* in France and through the link with the Renaissance in Italy.

If the efficacy of the "country of origin effect" for French and Italian fashion is based on the capacity to confer an added value to the resources of their cultural heritage, it is logical to expect that such an opportunity would also be exploited at company level.

History and Brand

Right from the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of the *maisons* of Parisian *haute couture* had begun to envision the course that was to lead to their transformation into brands. Paul Poiret was a pioneer of this approach, initiating a far-seeing diversification of production. He was the first *couturier* to enlarge the activity of a fashion house to include cosmetics to empower "brand equity." The first perfume, *Rosine*, launched in 1911, was followed by many other articles, such as other perfumes, *eaux de toilette*, perfumed soaps, beauty creams, face powder, lipsticks, and nail varnish. The entire production process was controlled by the *maison* and Poiret took great care over the selection of the fragrances and the choice of the names and packaging.[57] In 1921, comes the story of a success that does not seem to undergo any variation, that of Chanel's perfume *N^o 5*, sold in the refined yet minimalist packaging that we still know today. In 1924, Chanel created an association with the important perfume makers Burijois, founding the *Parfums Chanel* company. Poiret and Chanel later inspired other fashion houses, such as Jean Patou, Jeanne Lanvin, and Schiaparelli.[58]

Perfumery represented an important testing ground that allowed the fashion houses to verify their capacity to impact the market even through articles that were diversified from the traditional high fashion garments. In 1932, Chanel herself, for example, solicited by the *International Diamond Guild*, designed, in collaboration with Paul Iribe, a collection of jewelry that aroused the enthusiasm of the American press. Chanel was, however, more attracted to the creation of costume jewelry, for which a design laboratory entrusted to the Italian designer Fulco Santostefano della Cerda was created, while the actual making of the jewelry was carried out by the Parisian firm Gripoix.[59] Instead, Madeleine Vionnet was responsible for adopting a coherent strategy to support the brand identity: She commissioned the artist Thayaht with the task of envisioning the firm's communication style through the creation of a graphic project covering everything, from the *maison*s logo to the headed paper for the billing. The logo, together with the signature and the fingerprint of Madeleine Vionnet, even appeared on the label that, from 1922 on, distinguished the original garments of the *maison* Vionnet from copies.[60] Finally, after the Second World War, the advent of Christian Dior saw the wide use of licensing contracts, through which, on payment of royalties, various industries could produce articles to be sold under the Dior label.[61]

From the end of the twentieth century, the advent of the great luxury groups radically modified the situation and led to the elaboration of new strategies to support brand equity.[62] Actually in the front line of putting into practice promotion strategies based on a tighter and more innovative collaboration between art and fashion, we find the luxury super brands labeled Made in France, which have developed the technique of "art-keting," a neologism that combines art and marketing.[63] Particularly significant is the case of Louis Vuitton, a brand of the LVMH group, which has adopted diversified solutions to give value to its own cultural heritage. The exhibition "*Voyage en Capitale. Louis Vuitton & Paris*," held at the Museé Carnavalet in Paris in 2010–11, summarized the salient passages in the brand's history, highlighting its most significant elements.[64] Among these are, naturally, collaboration with artists for the decoration of trunks and luggages, presented as an identity element that has characterized the history of the brand from its origins, while the remodelling of the monogram, the symbol of the company, elaborated by designers over the course of time, is considered a contribution "to enrich contemporary art." Under the creative direction of Marc Jacobs (1997–2013), the involvement of artists has become the norm: Stephen Sprouse, Takashi Murakami, Sylvie Fleury, Jean Larivière, Richard Prince, and Damien Hirst work for Louis Vuitton, so that "codes, forms, history of the *Maison* become as many sources of inspiration for contemporary creation."[65] In other words, the brand—its symbol and its history—no longer merely plays the role of patron, but is an integral part of artistic creation: The cultural heritage is reproduced by renewing.

The brand identity of Louis Vuitton is also fed through more conventional forms of communication, which are no less effective, pivoting around the founding values of the firm and its history. The Fall–Winter advertising campaign for 2009 is a very interesting example. Titled "*Savoir faire*" and destined for the press, the campaign was centered on the representation of the craft tradition of Louis Vuitton. The photographer Désirée Dolron shot a series of portraits, each of which show a good-looking young man or woman, dressed soberly with austere elegance and in a pose similar to those in certain paintings by Jan Vermeer. The caption explains that these are expert craftsmen within Louis Vuitton, and they are shown with the tools of their trade for, for instance, the working of leather goods, such as a pair of shoes, a bag, and a wallet. They are completely absorbed in their work and concentrated on carrying out what seem to be particularly delicate operations: The coat of dark paint manually brushed onto the sole of a shoe,[66] the sewing by hand of a bag using linen thread protected with beeswax to prolong the durability of the article,[67] and the clever folding of leather in the making of a wallet.[68] However, these adverts were banned by the United Kingdom's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) because they "could have misled consumers into thinking Vuitton's products are handmade, when in fact the luxury brand also uses machines."[69] The justifications offered by the fashion house, which admitted that it also uses sewing machines in the production process, were held to be insufficient and the ASA confirmed the ban: "Because we had not seen evidence that demonstrated the extent to which Louis Vuitton products were made by hand, we concluded that the ads were misleading."[70]

Nonetheless, commemoration and recall of the craftsman tradition as an integral part of the DNA of luxury brands continues to be a typical method for adding value to the cultural heritage.[71] The year following the launch of Louis Vuitton's controversial campaign, in 2010, Gucci adopted the same strategy. In this case it too used printed adverts, these showing black and white photographs of the Gucci workshop *in via delle Caldaie* in Florence in 1953 and celebrating the 90th anniversary of the company's founding. The copywriters carefully avoided falling into the same trap as the Louis Vuitton adverts, showing an image of the production location and limiting themselves to evoking a long craft history. It was the selfsame history of the company, immersed in the craft culture of Florence, that conferred identity on the brand, projecting it into a timeless dimension: "Touching our past as we craft our future. Compelling us to carry its iconic legend forward—now and forever."[72]

Transforming one's history into a resource that is then placed, paradoxically, into a context beyond history, attributing it with an "eternal" value, is a strategy common to other luxury brands, such as Hermès, whose identity is declined in such a manner as to combine past and present in an oxymoron: "Contemporary artisans since 1837."[73] It matters little that in the course of the 1980s the relaunching of its flagship product, the "*carré*," came about thanks to its repositioning "*comme un produit de 'qualité industrielle'*."[74]

The case of Salvatore Ferragamo, a family business that is part of the history of Made in Italy, offers a happy combination of conservation and safeguarding of the cultural heritage, giving value to the company's history as well as the promotion of cultural initiatives through realization of a coherent project that has contributed to consolidation of the brand identity without indulging in communicative artifice. The fulcrum of the project is the Museo Ferragamo, a company museum created in 1995, originally to document the life of Salvatore Ferragamo, the company's founder, and to gather his creations in a permanent exhibition; from 2006, this has been substituted by temporary exhibitions each year dedicated to "a different research theme that gives the opportunity to discover the world of Ferragamo in an indirect way combined with other cultural expressions such as art, architecture, design, economic and social history and philosophy."[75] The Museum is complemented by the Historical Archive, which holds documents, patents, prototypes, and products.[76] Through the exhibitions and their respective catalogues, the Museum illustrates the contribution of Salvatore Ferragamo to the evolution of fashion, highlighting, beyond his creativity, both his constant commitment to research into new materials and his intense interaction with the society and the economy of his time. In other words, exhibitions and their catalogues, through a thematic focus, show in detail how innovation and creativity have characterized the history of the brand, a history that identifies with the brand itself, and are a way of creating added-value for a brand through its own history, which collocates that history in time rather than outside of it.

Final Remarks

The honor of having started the process of legitimizing fashion as a form of art, thanks to which the fashion system's economy was able to integrate the communication resources offered by the cultural heritage—fashion as art—for the growth of the sector in the second half of the twentieth century, lies with Parisian *haute couture*. A cultural heritage represented by the patrimony of know-how and reputation accumulated by *haute couture* was then invested in the relaunching of a renewed French fashion after World War II. In the Italian experience, the "reuse" of the Renaissance underpinned the emerging Italian fashion of the 1950s. On the other hand, the businesses of the fashion system themselves knew how to transform their cultural heritage, made up of their own history, into an efficient tool supporting their brand identity.[77]

It was a process that, as has been said, started in the years following World War II, and was then consolidated in the last twenty years of the twentieth century. Globalization has offered new opportunities in the international market and the firms in the fashion system have exploited this using diversified strategies: On the one hand, constructing corporate holdings through mergers and acquisitions, and on the other, integrating fashion with other production sectors, thus creating space in consumer culture for the proposal of an integrated lifestyle, from clothing to food.[78] Precisely the creation of this model of lifestyle—the refined luxury of Made in France as well as the "*Dolce vita*" style of Made in Italy—was amply based on cultural heritage, both through intensifying and renewing interactions between art and fashion and by recovering and using history as a way to add value. Specifically, this recovery of the past falls within the marketing strategies adopted by the field of fashion according to the approach of the so-called "Reviving sleeping beauty brands."[79] This is a scenario that Luc Boltanski and Arnaud Esquerre have defined as an "enrichment economy," which includes "the arts, especially the plastic arts, and other cultural manifestations, trade in ancient objects, the creation of foundations and museums, the luxury industry, heritage creation, and tourism," diverse fields drawn together by the fact of basing themselves "on their common exploitation of an underlying stratum that is purely and simply *the* past,"[80] and introducing storytelling as a new way to add value to brand equity.

Notes

1 V. Jones, M. Lorenzen, and J. Sapsed (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Creative Industries* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); R. Towse (ed), *The Handbook of Cultural Economics* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2020).

2 D. Power and A.J. Scott (eds), *Cultural Industries and the Production of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2011).

3 *What Do We Mean by the Cultural and Creative Industries?* Accessed January 28, 2023. https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/digital-library/What%20Do%20We%20Mean%20by%20CCI.PDF.

4 See C. Capalbo and D. Calanca, "Introductory Essay Essay. Fashion and Cultural Heritage," *ZoneMode Journal* 8 (2018): V–XV.

5 The theoretical discussion of the relationship between fashion and art lies outside the purpose of this chapter: on this matter see S. Bok Kim, "Is Fashion Art?" *Fashion Theory* 2 (1998): 51–71; R. Radford, "Dangerous Liaisons: Art, Fashion and Individualism," *Fashion Theory* 2 (1998): 151–63; S. Miller, "Fashion as Art'; Is Fashion Art?" *Fashion Theory* 11 (2007): 25–40.

6 G. Lipovetsky, *L'empire de l'éphémère* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 92–117; A. Hollander, *Sex and Suits* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: The University of California Press, 1993), 116–26.

7 "*Mon travail (…) n'est pas seulement d'exécuter mais surtout d'inventer. La création est le secret de mon succès. Je ne veux pas que les gens ordonnent leurs vêtements. S'ils le faisaient, je perdrais la moitié de mon commerce*" (Quoted by François-Marie Grau, *La haute couture* (Paris: PUF, 2000), 34).

8 Lipovetsky, *L'empire de l'éphémère*, 92–107; Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, 116–26; E. Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams. Fashion and Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 32.

9 "*Ce petit etre sec, noir, nerveux, les reçoit* [his customers] *en vareuse de velours, superbement étalé sur un divan, le cigare aux lèvres. Il leur dit: 'Marchez, tournez vous; bien; revenez dans huit jours, je vous composerai la toilette que vous convient.' Ce n'est pas elles qui choisissent, c'est lui (…). Aux gens qui s'étonnent il répond: 'Je suis un grand artiste, j'ai la couleur de Delacroix et je compose. Une toilette vaut un tableau'*" (H. Taine, *Notes sur Paris. Vie et opinions de M. Frédéric-Thomas Graindorge … recuiellies et publiées par H. Taine son exécuteur testamentaire* (Paris: Hachette, 1913), 144–5).

10 "*Nous sommes des artistes qui faisons du commerce*" (Quoted by Grau, *La haute couture*, 44).

11 "*Car j'ai toujours aimé les peintres, je me sens de plain pied avec eux. Il me semble que nous exerçons le même métier et que ce sont mes camarades de travail*" (P. Poiret, *En habillant l'époque* (Paris: Grasset, 1930), 93).

12 "*Le couturier est devenu le maître, l'arbitre tout puissant de la toilette des grandes dames. Et ces hommes sont ou ont été des grandes artistes!*" (O. Uzanne, *Parisiennes de ce temps en leurs divers milieux, états et conditions. Etude pour servir à l'histoire des femmes, de la societé. De la galanterie française, des moers contemporaines et de l'egoïsme masculine* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1910), 83, 86).

13 Lipovetsky, *L'empire de l'éphémère*, 92–107; N. Troy, *Couture Culture. A Study in Modern Art and Fashion* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT University Press, 2003).
14 "*Reconnu comme un artiste à part entire, le couturier, d'artisan anonyme, accède au statut de créateur et peut griffer ses créations*" (D. Grumbach, *Histoires de la mode* (Paris: Seuil, 1993), 20).
15 See E. Morini, *Interazioni fra moda e arte* (Milan: Mimesis, 2020).
16 Quoted by I. Renard, "Elsa Schiaparelli," in *Fashion Mix. Mode d'ici. Créateurs d'ailleurs*, ed. O. Saillard (Paris: Flammarion, 2014), 64.
17 V. Mendes and A. De la Haye, *20th Century Fashion* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 97–100. "Schiaparelli draws on all the latest artistic trends, from Cubism and African art to Surrealism, and she collaborated with a number of artists, most notably Salvador Dalì, Jean Cocteau, and fashion illustrator Christian Bérard, who designed the famous Medusa head for the back of one of her famous evening capes." (V. Steele, *Paris Fashion. A Cultural History* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999), 255).
18 See, among others, M. Pedroni and P. Volonté (eds), *Moda e arte* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2015).
19 E. Paulicelli, *Fashion Under Fascism* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2004), 33–7; E. Braun, "Making waves: Giacomo Balla and Emilio Pucci." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 20 (2015): 67–82; V. Gardner Troy, 'Stitching modernity: the textile work of Fortunato Depero." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 20 (2015), 24–33.
20 English, *A Cultural History of Fashion*, pp. 48–50; Bartlett, *Russian Constructivism*, pp. 361–3.
21 "*Si un couturier aujourd'hui vous parle de son métier, c'est que sa profession est passée de l'artisanat à la création artistique*" (*Conférences écrites par Christian Dior*, p. 19).
22 B. English, *A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th Century* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 86–90.
23 English, *A Cultural History of Fashion*, 1–4.
24 https://artsandculture.google.com/story/how-fashion-meets-culture/gwLyN_zp-PN1Lg. Accessed January 28, 2023. See, among others, Steele, *Paris Fashion*; C.M. Belfanti, *Histoire culturelle de la mode* (Paris: Institut Français de la Mode-Editions du Regard, 2014); M.L. Frisa, *Le forma della moda* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015).
25 Y. Kawamura, *Fashion-ology* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 32–7; English, *A Cultural History of Fashion*, 1–4.
26 L. Neira Garcia, 'Fashion: Cultural Heritage and the *Made in*,' *ZoneMode Journal* 8 (2018): 63–75.
27 On the concept of "fashion system" as productive organisation see I. Paris, 'Fashion as a System: Changes in Demand as the Basis for the Establishment of the Italian Fashion System (1960–1970)," *Enterprise & Society* 11 (2010): 524–59; Institut Français de la Mode, *Vingt ans de système de mode* (Paris: IFM-Editions du Regard, 2008).
28 As part of a cultural capital: D. Thorsby, "Cultural Capital," in *The Handbook of Cultural Economics*, ed. R. Towse (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2020), 166–9.
29 E.D. Jaffe and I.D. Nebenzahl, *National Image and Competitive Advantage* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press, 2006).
30 J. DeJean, *The Essence of Style: How the French invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York, London, Toronto, and Sidney: Free Press, 2005).
31 B. Blancheton (ed.), *Vers le haut de gamme made in France* (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 2021).
32 Ch. Barrère and W. Santagata, *La mode. Une économie de la creativité et du patrimoine à l'heure du marché* (Paris: La documentation Française, 2005), 53–60.
33 Barrère and Santagata, *La mode*, 60–73.
34 A. Rocamora, "Paris, Capitale de la Mode. Representing the Fashion City in the Media," in *Fashion's World Cities*, ed. C. Breward and D. Gilbert (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006), 43–54.
35 See, for instance, O.K. Pistilli, "The Heritage-Creativity Interplay. How Fashion Designers are Reinventing Heritage as Modern Design: the French Case," *ZoneMode Journal* 8 (2018): 77–95.
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18 Intellectual Property Rights in the Fashion Industry, from International to Post-Colonial Contexts

Véronique Pouillard

Introduction

This chapter examines the relations between the fashion industry, innovation, and intellectual property from the nineteenth century until today. Fashion is an industry straddling the boundary between art and commerce.[1] Its products feature a more or less important design component. During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, higher-end fashion products were considered to have a stronger design component than mass-market or basic fashions, but this changed gradually, especially after World War II, when designs emerged from more diverse sources, such as from the street and countercultures. The massification of the manufacturing and consumption of fashion products has had a profound influence on the industry, which changed at a rapid pace.

Early on, sociologists observed that a characteristic of the fashion industry was emulation and imitation, as explained by Gabriel Tarde in *Les lois de l'imitation*, published in 1890. Four decades later, Edward Bernays, a specialist in communication who was also considered a pioneer in the discipline of public relations, wrote of his interest in the sociological phenomenon of fashion as the best way to direct public opinion in democratic regimes. Fashion, for these two theoreticians, exercised a powerful force that drove the members of a human society in the same direction. This force was not necessarily rational. Rather, it was impossible to exactly pinpoint why some fashions were successful and others were not. Fashion is also imitation, and those two words, as defined by both theorists, were nearly synonymous. The fashion industry can therefore be defined as derivative. It aims to reproduce the more sought-after clothes and accessories for a number of consumers that kept increasing over the course of the last two centuries.[2]

Despite the definition of fashion as a derivative industry, numerous fashion producers—designers, manufacturers, retailers, and consultants—have developed a keen interest in intellectual property rights. Such rights include trademark, patent, copyright, protection of design, trade secrets, and fair competition.

In this context, the role of intellectual property in the fashion industry appears to be limited, but enduring, and shifted along with new societal demands. For example, the need for better traceability of the production of garments and accessories has resulted over recent decades in increased regulation of labeling and trademarking of products. Green trademarks are thus becoming a subfield of trademarking. In the context of increased scrutiny of the ecological imprint of fashion production, the emergence and development of greener labels is therefore quickly becoming an expanding field of scholarly inquiry.[3]

The time span of this chapter is characterized by periods of internationalization, until World War I, and of globalization, especially from the 1970s. Fashion economies have

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always been international and, most recently, questions on decoloniality have assumed a growing importance in the industry. First, this chapter examines the relation between innovation and intellectual property in the fashion industry. Second, it moves on to the issue of intellectual property in design, with a focus on the development of high authorship in France from the late nineteenth century. Third, the chapter examines the ways in which a Eurocentric system that posited high authorship in the fashion industry was exported around the world, with a focus on cases from Francophone colonies. Fourth, the chapter examines contestations of and limits to intellectual property. I use historical research methods, with a focus on the culture of law and business, and argue that the historical method and diachronic approach are particularly relevant in order to examine the relations between the law, practices, and norms. The first section especially aims to present the state of the art in the field. The second section builds on the historiography and previous research on the topic, and the third section is based on new research in unpublished archives and printed sources. The last parts of the chapter are based on further archives, more recent printed sources, and a historiography review.

Innovation, Patenting, and Trademarking

Garment and accessory firms innovated in numerous ways during the nineteenth century. Innovators took patents in domains that they considered to be relevant for the progress of the industry, and that they wanted to protect. The most famous of these was a group of patents for nine innovations that together made the invention of the sewing machine possible. The history of the sewing machine and the spread of this innovation around the world are studied by Andrew Godley in Chapter 1 of this volume. From the point of view of patenting itself, the case of the sewing machine was creative, considering that the disputes between several innovators who claimed to have invented the sewing machine evolved in what is considered to be the first patent pool in history. In 1856, Elias Howe, Orlando B. Potter, Allen B. Wilson, Nathaniel Wheeler, and Isaac Singer contracted a patent pool for the sewing machine for a limited duration, until 1877.[4] The case of the sewing machine has interested economists, who have aimed to understand the effects of patenting on the dynamics of innovation and, furthermore, the effects of patent pooling. Economists Ryan Lampe and Petra Moser have measured the number of patents taken by other industrialists before, during, and after the patent pool was in force and evaluated the number of stitches per minute—a measure of the economic efficiency of the new machines—during these various phases. Their calculations show that, while the patent pool was in force, the number of stitches per minute stagnated; therefore, they argued, the patent pool had the effect of slowing innovation in the design of sewing machines.[5]

Domains of activity such as corsetry, sports clothes, and performance clothes remain attractive areas for the registering of patents. In her extensive research on the history of patents, Bibi Zorina Khan has shown that, although women were underrepresented among innovators taking out patents, women were more represented in the areas of domestic-related and garment-related works.[6] Furthermore, Kat Jungnickel demonstrated that, for women in the Victorian era, taking out patents could be considered an act of affirmation of their citizenship in the era of the conquest of the suffrage. Today, the increasing interest in performance textiles and so-called intelligent textiles creates newer opportunities for firms to innovate and take out patents.[7]

Most fashion production today remains dependent on the human hand: To feed the textile into the sewing machines, operate them, and perform many finishing tasks. Most of the machines used in the fashion industry remain quite similar to those described in the first patent pool, and such machines, provided they remain in good condition, can be used today to make fashionable garments. The fashionability of the garment, therefore, is not necessarily dependent on the performance of the machine.[8] Yet, notable improvements have taken place since the nineteenth century—most notably, the electrification of the machines, which increased the speed of production. Other innovations have developed in terms of clothes fastenings, such as the design of the zipper, developed in New Jersey by Gideon Sundback in 1913.[9] Over the next decades, when they replicated French designs for the U.S. markets, American garment producers tended to replace fastenings such as hooks and eyes or buttons with zippers.[10] Another important invention was Lycra, developed by Delaware-based firm Dupont de Nemours in 1959. The elasticated quality of Lycra has, as shown by historian Kaori O'Connor, changed the way numerous garments are worn, including jeans, by changing the quality of the fabric from stiff to flexible.[11] Newer developments in the use of Lycra have resulted in a long lifetime of patents for that innovation, whose success is enduring. For example, in recent years, the Lycra Company sued four companies based in China on the grounds of a lack of respect for the dual core patent for denim. In 2021, the lawsuit ended with a financial settlement in which the four defendants acknowledged the Lycra Company's rights.[12]

Innovation in the fashion industry is complex, as it combines technological innovation with design novelty. Indeed, technology can have an important effect on design. For example, the wearing of jeans containing Lycra fibers and the discovery of new colors from synthetic dyes, as discussed by Regina Lee Blaszczyk in her chapter in this volume, are innovative on both the technological and the aesthetic fronts. Yet the frequency of change in the fashion industry results primarily from design novelty, with the presentation of new designs each season making older designs obsolete. During the 1950s, for example, this obsolescence was of six or seven years, with Paris couturiers such as Dior and Balenciaga creating a silhouette made to last for such an amount of time, and since then designs have changed with increasing rapidity, creating faster obsolescence of fashion, that is now the topic of critiques from consumers but also from a part of the industry, as well.[13] The programming of fashion calendars is an important activity in the industry[14] and, especially from the postwar era, experts such as semiologist Roland Barthes have discussed the acceleration of the fashion seasons, some brands presenting several dozen micro-seasons per year.[15] While this acceleration was seen positively during the economic boom of the postwar years, it is no longer sustainable. Some producers remain attached to fast-paced seasons, but other firms propose a return to a more stable offer that may include, for example, the conduction of similar designs from one collection to another.[16]

The needs of innovative entrepreneurs to authenticate their production, certify its quality, and protect their designs has a history that is as ancient as international trade.[17] The garment industry evolved from the practice of bringing cloth to a tailor or a seamstress, and *haute couture* houses started to provide both the fabric and the design of the garment, creating new needs for demonstrating authenticity during the nineteenth century. Couturiers inserted their brands in the waist of the garments (with a *cordon de taille*). Firms included their name and often their address as a signature for the garment. The participation of industrialists in the World Fairs and international exhibitions, starting in the mid-nineteenth century, reinforced a commercial culture in which it was important to advertise one's product to domestic and foreign markets and to protect innovations.[18]

Against this backdrop, the figure of the couturier emerged as a genius designer. Scholarly works have examined the status of the couturier and couturiere, usually self-defining as artisans and entertaining proximity to the so-called higher arts.[19] For example, Gabrielle Chanel was a philanthropist to choreographers, illustrators, and musicians. Jacques Doucet was an important collector of paintings and rare books. Lucien Lelong was a patron of the arts and trained himself in sculpting. The list goes on, demonstrating the symbiotic relationship that linked *haute couture* to other arts and crafts.[20]

Copyrighting Fashion: High Authorship and Collective Lawsuits

Fostering greater intellectual property rights for arts and crafts raised difficult issues around the relations between aesthetics, elitism, and the production of beautiful objects for the masses. In her groundbreaking book *Couture Culture*, Nancy Troy showed that the world of *haute couture* in turn-of-the-century Paris acted to protect its intellectual property while new art forms emerged that subverted the notion of the aura of the work as described by Walter Benjamin.[21] Emerging artists such as the Cubists, and then Marcel Duchamp, who practiced the ready-made, challenged the boundaries between high- and low-brow art productions. This, in turn, contributed to legitimize *haute couture*.[22]

A major challenge was to foster profits from the dissemination of haute couture into foreign markets. This topic has been well studied for other cultural productions and, notably, for literary and dramaturgic productions, where this challenge arose especially from translations.[23] In the case of fashion, translation was not involved as such, but rather unwanted reproductions, often serialized, in overseas markets. Several types of intellectual property could be used in the case of fashion products: The protection of the trademark or brand; the protection of fashion drawings and fashion plates against counterfeits; and the protection of garment designs.[24]

During the interwar period, high-profile cases of fashion entrepreneurs suing copyists of their designs and counterfeiters of their brands appeared in French courts. Following in the footsteps of entrepreneurs of the Belle Epoque such as Paul Poiret and the Callot sisters, designers of the new generation sought to protect their work from imitations. Among them, Madeleine Vionnet distinguished herself as an outstanding designer and a protective businesswoman.[25] She worked in close connection with managing directors and lawyers who represented her interests in professional associations and in the courts. Lawsuits resulted in an increase in intellectual property case law and a legitimization of the brand value of *haute couture*. In the cases that Vionnet won during the 1920s, the counterfeiters had to pay not only damages but also for half a dozen or a dozen insertions in the newspapers giving publicity to the case they lost. Such publications contributed to the criminalization of counterfeiting fashions in the public sphere.[26] However, it remained challenging for the Paris couturiers to assert their authority in foreign markets, especially in the United States, where the law was much less protective of fashion designs than was the case in France.[27]

Cases won by the Paris couturiers against copyists in the courts reinforced the authenticity of their brands, themselves based on the aura of the individual names of the designers.[28] Yet the collective action of the couturiers was essential in achieving greater brand value. Unlike in other professions such as literature or music, the couturiers did not enjoy the support of authors' rights societies. Instead, the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne played that role for them. The Chambre hired the services of lawyers during the interwar period and represented the couturiers as a private plaintiff in their lawsuits against copyists. In turn, damages that the couturiers obtained when they won lawsuits against fashion pirates were pooled by the Chambre, which used those funds for charities supporting couture workers.[29]

Intellectual Property Cases in Colonial Contexts

The Paris and the Berne Conventions, which protected industrial rights and copyright were the result of nineteenth-century internationalism. From early on, the Western powers included their colonial empires in the reach of those treaties, which were seen by many in the West as promoters of peace and science.[30] The treaties also imposed Western definitions of law on colonized countries. Successive revisions of Conventions have sought to adapt the frameworks of intellectual property to the needs of developing countries, but historians such as Eva Hemmungs Wirtén have shown that such adaptations were insufficient to cater to the specificities and demands of countries that had suffered numerous consequences of colonization and decolonization.[31]

Examinations of court and trade association archives show that couturiers frequently banded together against copyists. Court proceedings show that groups of entrepreneurs or networks of intermediaries often operated in the grey zones of the trade. During the postwar era, couturiers extended the geographical reach of their legal actions to other countries. The system of intellectual property rights and case law that protected the *haute couture* firms extended its international influence. In the United States, where fashion designs were not included in the scope of copyright law or industrial design registration, judges nonetheless convicted copyists and counterfeiters who engaged in unfair competition, another aspect of intellectual property. The prominent Paris *haute couture* firm Christian Dior, in this way, managed to have their complaints of unfair competition against New York-based copyist firm Milton acknowledged by judges in the United States.[32]

The house of Dior, one of the most active couture firms in organizing the dissemination of couture abroad, set up contracts for the authorized reproduction of its designs with buyers abroad and in the French provinces. The buyers from the French colonies were listed among the provincial buyers. In 1949 two buyers were registered in the departments of of Algeria—Prome, 4 rue d'Alsace-Lorraine, in Oran, and Choucroune, 5 Place Foch, also in Oran—and three in the French protectorate of Morocco, all of them in Casablanca—Boyrie, 57 boulevard Guynemer, Marie Claire (Mlle Marie Claire Merreaux), 67, boulevard de la Gare, and Mathilde Goirand, 248 boulevard de la Gare.[33] These were the only buyers present in French colonies, but the list of foreign buyers at Dior included businesses situated in, among other places, South Africa.

The global reach of such contracts for the authorized reproduction of *haute couture* designs went hand in hand with the repression of counterfeits on the same markets. The archives of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne show that the anti-piracy activities of the trade association reached outside Northern Europe and the United States. During the 1950s, groups of Paris couturiers sought to dismantle networks of copyists based in French provincial cities such as Bordeaux and Marseille, and in the French colonies and protectorates. In 1952 the Chambre mandated police agents to dismantle a network of copyists of *haute couture* that had workshops and retail branches in Greece and in Syria.[34] Professional organizations, and in particular the Chambre, acknowledged the importance of the International Convention on Copyright signed in Geneva on September 6, 1952, as a step towards heightened international protection of intellectual property rights, including for *haute couture*. The French couturiers used various elements in intellectual property rights to extend the protection of their creations abroad. For example, in countries that did not recognize copyright on fashion designs they could use the international registration of their designs as proof of anteriority, which was not required where copyright could be used.[35] In the present day, fashion firms may send lawyers and require police to search counterfeiting establishments in distant countries, but these method are far from being recent in origin.[36]

In examining the intellectual property lawsuits that took place in colonial contexts, I aim to better grasp the extension of intellectual property over fashion designs. The examples considered here come from counterfeiting lawsuits that took place in Congo during the 1950s, the last decade of Belgian rule. The first case took place in the court of Elisabethville (Tribunal de Première Instance), today Lumumbashi in the province of Katanga, in south-east Congo, a region particularly rich in mineral resources.[37] The plaintiff, firm C. et Cie, sued the defendant, firm G., for the counterfeiting of a manufactured print fabric in December 1953. The plaintiff had registered the fabric nearly a year earlier, in January 1953, at the Ministry of the Colonies in Brussels, where all patents and industrial designs to be exploited and sold in Belgian Congo had to be registered, according to a law of 1922.[38] The plaintiff demanded the exclusivity of the fabric print for a duration of three years, but soon saw that a competing company, firm G., had had a similar fabric made in Japan, imported, and sold on the Congolese market, with exclusivity in the market of Lumumbashi. On December 29, 1953, the court of first instance of Elisabethville convicted the defendant, firm G., on the grounds of unfair competition (*concurrence déloyale*).[39] The defendant then appealed the case in the Court of Appeal of Elisabethville. The judgment on appeal was passed on January 31, 1956, and upheld the previous judgment against firm G, only diminishing the damages demanded for unfair competition. The judgment gives further indications of the grounds on which intellectual property rights cases were judged in the colony. While unfair competition was cited as the main reason for the judgment, and for maintaining the same line of reasoning in the appeal, the courts' proceedings show a complex and nuanced series of arguments in which counterfeiting was also a consideration in the judgment on appeal.[40]

A question raised during the appeal of 1956 was whether unfair competition did or did not cancel the count of counterfeiting. The plaintiff, C. et Cie, had indeed qualified the infringement as unfair competition, but had also defined the infraction as an infringement of the usage of protected designs—or, in other words, counterfeiting. In the Belgian jurisprudence, a case from 1939 had decided the incompatibility between unfair competition and counterfeiting. But, in this case, the judges thought that both counts were compatible, and therefore that the firm G. could be ordered to pay damages under either the count of unfair competition or of counterfeiting. Each of these actions, added the judge, had as its base in article 258 of the Civil code, book III. Both counts were relevant in the case, added the judge, considering that the drawings of the fabric that was the source of the litigation showed that it was not just an industrial design but also retained an artistic character. The judge then added that the facts proceeded not only from the protection of industrial design but also from authors' rights, all of which were, in Belgian Congo, modeled on Belgian law and enjoyed reciprocity under the rules of the Berne Convention.[41] Therefore, according to the law, including the revised decree on authors' right of June 21, 1948, the registration of the fabric design was not even necessary to prove that there had been counterfeiting or unfair competition.

Another case that went to the Court of Appeal of Kinshasa (then called Léopoldville) on April 28, 1959, was judged along similar lines to this first case. The second case opposed two women entrepreneurs over the counterfeiting of a series of wax fabrics, an important product for fashionable wear in this part of the African continent, as examined in detail by Anne Grosfilley in her chapter in this volume. Four designs of fabric had been counterfeited. The entrepreneur, firm N., was convicted, in this case as in the previous one, on the grounds of unfair competition, and had to pay damages for this reason. The defendant also had to immediately cease any sale of the counterfeited fabrics. In addition, in this second case, the convicted entrepreneur had to publicize the judgment by placing a notice on the doors of her retail premises and publishing two newspapers insertions at her own expense.[42]

Numerous common points appear among the counterfeiting cases judged in the courts of Belgian Congo and cases initiated by couturiers against counterfeiters. The chief accusation of unfair competition was, as discussed above, used in the United States to protect designs from copying. In Congo, the judges used the arguments of unfair competition, copyright, and industrial protection together to try cases of illegal copying of fashion designs. The cases that appear in the case law of colonial Congo were about the industry of fashionable print fabrics. Some of these fabrics were categorized as wax, but not all. The first lawsuit described above shows a case of distant production—in Japan—of counterfeits destined to middle-class and affluent central African markets. The second case, which concerned a series of four counterfeited designs, shows the judge demanding that the counterfeiter publicize her conviction. This shows continuity with the practice of the law as seen in the cases brought by the *grande couturière* Madeleine Vionnet against counterfeiters of her designs.[43]

Other cases judged in Belgian Congo show that the protection of trademarks was also exercised in the courts of the colony with similar arguments to those used in the metropole. There was apparently no notion that intellectual property rules should be adapted or considered differently in the colonial context. For the broader context of these cases, it is, however, relevant to note that the colonial authority maintained, during the same period, tribunals that were dedicated to the practice of customary law. Numerous cases treated there were on familial matters, but there was, potentially, some overlap between colonial law and customary law; however, this does not seem to have much influenced questions of intellectual property rights.

Those cases show a coherence with counterfeiting cases brought in interwar Europe, especially in France. The legal framework and the grounds for convicting counterfeiters of fashionable products were similar in these various contexts. Western colonizers had taken with them rules on authorship and applied them regardless of the background of the entrepreneur or the origin of the design, which is coherent with the doctrine that intellectual property rights address not the aesthetic of a design but its intrinsic qualities of originality. Indeed, in the second lawsuit from colonial Congo examined here, the judgment was protective of designs in wax fabric that are associated with Central African culture and are also the product of a highly internationalized culture of exchanges. The questions posed in the colonial courts of Congo were never about local origination in the design. In that sense, copyright as applied in the colonial cases examined was coherent with the ambition of universality of the Berne Convention.

But the internationalization of intellectual property law did not happen in a cultural vacuum. The Belgian colonial authority in Congo attempted to organize courts along two lines, as briefly intimated above: One was Belgian law applied by the Belgians in the colony, from which proceeded the cases briefly examined above. The other was customary law (*droit coutumier*), which had its own courts. Cases tried under customary law and transcribed in the Belgian sources could approach, for example, roles in craftsmanship. But this legal framework did not seem to be effective, as far as the sources I have examined suggest, in preserving the craftmanship heritage of the Congo population. Woven fabrics were retailed without a proper acknowledgment of their origins, such as Kasai velvet, a prized, delicate, handwoven fabric that could be found in European art galleries copyrighted under the name of the Belgian or French retailer. These fabrics were bought in Congo and went through various intermediaries on their way to Europe, so that the traces of the artisans who created them were lost.[44] Already during the interwar period, members of the commission in charge of the preservation of colonial heritage in Belgium were concerned by the consequences of trafficking of the arts of the colonized people.

This brief examination of the exports of intellectual property outside Europe show important blind spots in the law, such as in the realm of local arts and crafts in colonial contexts.[45] It also shows that fewer and fewer places on the world's map were out of reach of the originators of intellectual property when they decided to sue copyists. Today, police raids aim to dismantle the workshops and stocks of counterfeiters around the world, despite the persistent disparities globally in the status of copying in the realm of fashion. For example, the United States joined the Berne Convention for the Protection of Copyright only in 1989, and to this day U.S. copyright law does not include fashion design.

When Designers Question Intellectual Property

The previous paragraphs have shown the race to protect original fashion designs in the courts. But experts disagree as to the negative effects of the production of imitations and fakes. Some believe that the commerce in fakes may also help in educating the taste of consumers, who may start by buying a fake but, later on, may buy the real product.[46] Seen from that vantage point, fakes are part of a system that creates aspiration for fashion. An entrepreneur who took advantage of that was Gabrielle Chanel. An example of a rags-to-riches story who is often invoked to discuss women's empowerment, Chanel had a very complex approach to intellectual property.[47] Research in the archives of the French courts shows that, during the interwar period, she banded together with Madeleine Vionnet to sue copyists.[48] Yet she was also a pioneer in licensing her brand, which became an iconic enterprise with her Chanel N°5 perfume, launched on May 5, 1921. Chanel capitalized very early on her brand, launching a fine jewelry line during the Great Depression, but also opening, next to her *haute couture* establishment, a Chanel fabrics shop to sell her distinctive tweeds, prints, and trimmings to the women who wanted to reproduce Chanel garments at home, which was allowed by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne.[49] Authenticity and reproduction were, in the case of Chanel, two faces of the same coin, that together enhanced the unparalleled reach of the brand.

This examination of the ways in which intellectual property was approached in the colonial realm shows the ways in which the West imposed its own systems of protection overseas, in competitive markets such as in the United States but also in its colonial empires. Colonized populations found ways to exercise their creativity in the use of intellectual property systems set up by political and legal regimes that were imposed on them from the outside, and by force.

Yet such systems, to this day, generate numerous challenges. One is the co-optation of the brand that can be reinterpreted in the way brands are worn. Another pathway goes further in subverting the brand, not just when wearing it but also by reinterpreting it, modifying it, or engaging directly with the question of counterfeits. A third question is taken up in the important debates on cultural appropriation, in which designers of garments infused with folklore, for example, may feel spoliated when they see their designs re-used by brands who do not credit their origin. The counterargument in this debate is that all should be free to use inspirations across cultures. Despite the effort of preservation of folklore by institutions such as the UNESCO, much remains to be done to understand such questions and appease such debates.[50]

The business model that stabilized during the postwar era was based on brand licenses. *Haute couture* firms kept a small production of higher-end designs in ateliers situated at their headquarters and presided over the licensed production of branded goods that followed sets of regulations set by the firm. The arrangements between licensor and licensee were organized following contract law. On some international markets, such as in the pioneering case of Japan, licenses became an important part of the economy of fashion.[51] The relations between the luxury firm and the licensing firms can encompass more or less control and demands over design identity and quality of the production, to cite a couple of criteria.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of *haute couture* firms were integrated into larger entities, the luxury groups, which brought the advantage of a greater financial stability. Newer business models emerged, that can be analyzed as a reaction to an excess of branding and licenses. Numerous fashion designers had come to prominence in the era of licensing. Some of these brands, such as the Belgian designers Ann Demeulemeester, Dries Van Noten, and Martin Margiela (the last discussed below), chose to retain a more confidential image and to limit their lines of branded goods.

During this era, branding became synonymous with affluence and display. Brands were not just a way to show wealth, aspirations, taste preferences, and ambitions. They also started weighing in the portfolios of firms' assets, in the fashion industry as well as in other domains, such as accessories, beauty, sports goods, and hospitality. Against this backdrop, some emerging designers used their own creativity to question the business models of luxury. One important wave among this generation of designers was the Japanese deconstructionists. Another group was the Belgian designers often termed the Antwerp Six, to which is usually added a seventh designer, Martin Margiela. In 1988, Margiela built his brand on the concept of making the brand disappear. Margiela showed his first collection for the year 1989 with blank white tags sewn into the back of the clothes. Yet, on the outer back of the clothes, four white diagonal stitches affixing the label inside the garment were visible, making the invisible brand a rallying sign for the informed consumer.[52] In later bridge line or less luxurious collections, a plain flat white stitched line appeared at the back, holding the label. The idea was to put the accent back on the clothes, but also to use fashion in a critical and ironical manner. The critique addressed to branding systems was radical. Margiela developed his entire communication around absence. There were no large billboard campaigns, no magazine spreads, and few or no colors on the clothes. Margiela himself refused to be photographed and rapidly became known as the faceless designer. In so doing, he was one of a kind in an era of adulation of the designer. His refusal soon became a pathway to critical recognition. In 2008, the newspaper *The Independent* titled an article about Margiela "Forget Banksy."[53] Then in his twenties, he had already become the global superstar of anonymity. He was a branding genius, with a brand that had become extraordinarily famous.

The strategy adopted by Margiela worked for several reasons. One was that he himself was a talented designer with a coherent esthetic. In other words, the clothes that he signed with his non-brand were desirable and often of great intelligence. Another reason was that Margiela was himself a member of schools with distinct esthetics, in which his work fitted very well. These were the Japanese school of deconstructionists designers that included Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo, the latter also known for her brand Comme des Garçons, and the Antwerp designers, among them the group best known as the Antwerp Six, all emerging from the Fine Arts Academy of Antwerp. Margiela was, therefore, part of wider esthetics that were, to some extent, minimalistic, but also developed a deep reflection on the nature of clothing.

His work followed after the great Japanese deconstructionist designers mentioned, but with new visions. For example, Margiela used the toile cover of the Stockman mannequins—another Belgian firm—to make garments. He also made garments entirely with older clothes, such as a top entirely made in a patchwork of old gloves stitched together. This was not just a fun piece of clothing, but conveyed in the spectator mixed feelings of repulsion—there were hands all over this top, and old gloves may convey an impression of a lack of hygiene—and at the same time coolness and uniqueness. Thought-provoking exercises about the body, the status of fashion, the place of art, and the heaviness of consumer society were repeated in collection after collection. The esthetic was further pursued in merchandizing in his first boutique in the rue de Flandre in Brussels, where everything was white—the floor, the doors, the façade, the entire interior, the telephones—which gave the shop a radical look that, according to Margiela's assistants, had developed quite organically when working on the spot, when the team realized how effective it was to paint everything white.

In 2006, Italy-based group Only the Brave (OTB) acquired full control over the house of Margiela. Since then, the group has kept growing with the development and acquisition of further designer brands. The group pursues an active intellectual property rights strategy: For example, it filed the trademark MM6, for a bridge branded line, in 2012.[54] Maison Martin Margiela has also developed protective terms for markets where intellectual property rights might be challenged, such as the United States.[55] OTB won an intellectual property award in 2015.[56]

Numerous designers have engaged with the symbolic and financial value of the brand. I briefly evoke several cases here, among numerous others: The Harlem tailor Dapper Dan and his relation to luxury brands; the controversy opposing the late Virgil Abloh to Walter Van Beirendonck; and the co-opting of the IKEA bag by the brand Balenciaga, then designed by Demna Gvasalia. I only briefly discuss these examples, to underline that such cases deserve further study.

The first of these examples is Dapper Dan, a Harlem tailor who owned a shop branded as "Gucci Made in Harlem" and in 2019 published his autobiography, where he details, among other points, his relation to brands and creativity. Dan was an extremely skilled tailor who used brands as a citation and homage, but who also received scrutiny from the same brands for that. In an industry where there are few ways to cite, engaging with design critiques of the brand can be challenging.[57] Yet Dan's at times contested engagement with globalized brands developed in collaborations. These have become very popular over the last couple of decades, and the economic benefits resulting from such cross-fertilization also tend to alleviate potential controversies over copying.

As intimated above, a challenging question for the fashion craft is the issue of citation in a system of creativity where a proper citation system barely exists, or, in other words, where citation may often be interpreted as ambiguous or based on good faith. Virgil Abloh, a designer who developed a brilliant career under his brand Off-White, was also a designer under the umbrella of Vuitton for the luxury group LVMH before his premature death in 2021. Like Dan before him, Abloh pushed the limits of creativity and questioned potentialities for using modes of citation in fashion design. Abloh was known to question the limits of the citation of branding and forms with his work. But this could be perceived as infringement, rather than as a new form of creativity, which is what happened when a conflict of attribution arose in the case of the design of a men's coat and matching rag doll in tone-on-tone wool. Walter Van Beirendonck, a designer historically a member of the Antwerp Six Group, alerted the media to the similarities between Abloh's design for Vuitton and some of his own works from a few years earlier. Although the colors were not identical, the design concept, cut, shape, material, destination, and meaning were indeed very close. An article on the topic published in the *New York Times* attracted comments that debated the questions of copying and the just way to cite colleague designers. It remains uncertain whether Abloh or his assistants had absorbed the visual grammar of an admired predecessor or whether the similarity was intentional.[58]

The citation of a brand does not always involve the co-option of a luxury brand by a lesser-known and less-affluent one. This idea was subverted in several cases, such as the design citations of the so-called *refugee* red-white-and-blue bag by various high-end designers.[59] Another case was the copying by Paris *haute couture* firm Balenciaga of the mass-produced, robust, and inexpensive blue plastic transport bag from IKEA. The IKEA bag is indeed iconic, and retails for under a dollar or pound. Balenciaga made replicas of this bag in the same color, but in real leather, and retailed them for more than $2,000, which sent ripples of indignation throughout the media. IKEA replied with its own advertising campaign celebrating the iconic status of its bag.[60] This rested upon the robustness of IKEA's finances; the company did not need to claim a share of the profits made by Balenciaga. The episode had turned the direction of copying on its head.[61]

Conclusion

Profound divergences remain in the use of intellectual property by fashion firms and designers that are not just a matter of national preference. While it is true that France enjoys a legal system that allows for a strong protection of fashion innovation, not all industrialists in France agree with the need for protection. The United States enjoys a less protective legal system, which is related to its history as a nation specializing in ready-to-wear manufacturing.[62] Such an interpretation suggests that national governing actors have in mind their innovative industries when reinforcing their intellectual property laws in some fields of activity to the exclusion of others.

Fashion producers may experience challenges that are related to their access to legal services. During the interwar period, *haute couture* firms joined forces in order to be able to afford lawyers and legal counsels to help them with protection on domestic and international markets. Today, instances of small designers being spoliated of their creations by large companies are recurrent, and demonstrate that the balance of power in accessing legal services is strongly tipped in favor of the large firms. The emergence of websites that denounce copycats, as analyzed by Paula von Wachenfeldt in her chapter in this volume, may be viewed as a form of rebellion on the part of smaller players, who use social media platforms to name and shame larger competitors considered to be copyists and benefiting from unfair advantages. Important designers have also committed to cite, transform, and reinterpret brands that are protected but that have become during the last century emblematic of popular culture, such as Dapper Dan was doing with Gucci, for example.

Today, branding and trademark law seem to have become dominant in intellectual property rights portfolios in the fashion industry. Patent may, however, gain renewed importance as new fabrics, such as intelligent textiles, and new machines, such as sewing or measuring robots, develop and are commercialized.

In a field where citation is often ambiguous and subject to interpretation, we have seen that the use of visual citations in fashion design tends to provoke discourses on copying in the media, and may trigger actions in the courts. Intellectual property presents fashion creativity with several challenges. One, that has appeared in the cases discussed above, is the difficulty in situating the border between originality and copying in an industry that is inherently derivative. This argument was opposed by the United States legislator to the French system of copyright law, which included fashion among the industries that enjoyed copyright protection. Indeed, it remains challenging to guarantee originality in the making of garments that have all two sleeves, a body, and a skirt or two legs. The derivative character of fashion was the main reason for legislators' refusals to protect copyright in fashion designs and textiles, in, for example, the United States.[63] We have seen that early problems arose from the dissemination of patented innovations and from the reproduction of novelty designs. Such challenges have endured.

The times and places of intellectual property matter to the fashion industry. In any eventuality, protection of fashion designs is always for a limited time. The first patent pool in history lasted for 20 years, a period during which the economists Lampe and Moser have shown that innovation in this domain slowed down. The fabrics designs registered in Belgium for their commercial exploitation in Congo were protected for a duration of three years. A recurrent discussion in the field of fashion law is that the usual duration of copyright—in France, 70 years after the death of the author—is too long to be relevant for fashion. But in the case of classic luxury items such as Chanel jackets or handbags or Hermès handbags or scarves, the length of the protection may sustain the prosperity of the firms. This takes place in a broader context, in which fashion cycles have become so fast that they hardly matter, giving newer fashionable interest to more static or classic luxury objects.

The fashion industries are among the most globalized. As far as intellectual property rights are concerned, globalization creates specific difficulties. Intellectual property rights were strongly influenced by the francophone views on high authorship. The French fashion entrepreneurs were at the forefront of lobbying for high authorship in their industry. They partially succeeded, with the already-mentioned exception of the United States. Yet this chapter has shown that European countries and, as the cases studied for this chapter make clear, the francophone countries especially, readily transferred their intellectual property rights to their colonies. Such systems protected the most internationalized productions, but were often inadequate to prevent looting and appropriation of the arts and crafts made by colonized people. International organizations such as UNESCO alleviated some, but not all, of these challenges.[64] Today, these questions regularly come to the fore in cases broadly defined as relating to cultural appropriation. In the face of this, creators have also engaged in critiques of intellectual property, generating, in turn, some of the most compelling fashion productions of the last decades.

Notes

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19 Creativity Revisited

Luxury Fashion in the Age of Social Media Activism

Paula von Wachenfeldt

Introduction

It seems like the appellation "luxury fashion" is facing the same destiny as "art". The eternal question "what is art?" can also be applied to "what is luxury fashion?" leaving us with no simple answers and instead only multidimensional ones. Is luxury fashion a social convention in the sense that it is the consumer who determines its value or is it the fashion houses that nurture the consumers with this value? Both assumptions have proved to be legitimate. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the dressmaker's name was spread by word of mouth in the salons. This resulted in the establishment of important networks for the dressmakers that helped them to achieve success and recognition. The buyers—the aristocracy in this case—had the power to uphold the value of the handmade work. However, the advancement of more elaborate communication techniques, like advertising and illustrations in fashion magazines, put forward the reputation of the atelier and the designer. Today, YouTube commercials, Instagram advertisements and high-fashion brands' websites constitute an important marketing tool that directs the consumer's expectations by loading the products with a variety of positive narratives.[1] Moreover, influencers' feeds and Instagrammers' product displays have also become one of the main marketing tools for sponsorship by luxury brands, resulting in a disputable outcome for the state of luxury.[2]

Yet luxury fashion is not just any kind of fashion. The quality of its materials and the meticulous work of production allow an important insight into its conception and creation. These prerequisites are important features in the communication strategies of the luxury brand. I would even argue that it is through the visual and textual representations of the products that the idea of luxury fashion becomes more conceivable for the consumer. The label "luxury fashion" can thus be a four-step formula: it is first an intentional conceptual space launched by the house; second, it is physically materialized in the objects; third, it is promoted through various communication techniques; fourth, it is confirmed and maintained by the consumers themselves.[3]

Today, one of the most important communication tools that has set in motion new prerequisites for visibility and advertising techniques is social media. This digital technology has enabled the mediatization of fashion, covering events like fashion shows, clothes retailing, and consumer's everyday practices of fashioning the self.[4] Previously, I have explored the outcome of the *mediation* of high fashion and the exposure of posh lifestyles on Instagram, an application that is owned by Meta.[5] I regarded mediation as a contemporary social tool that helps people to experience the everyday world through the frequent embodiment of luxury brands. My aim was to understand the aftermath of

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the dissemination of luxury in digital media and the effects of this communication on the idea of luxury in contemporary society. The study was conducted from the perspective of exploring the visual and textual posts of a group of Instagram users; that is to say, from the media user perspective. However, social media can also entail another important significance for the brands when it denounces moral issues connected to the luxury fashion industry, as we shall see in this chapter.

Departing from these reflections, I intend first to explore the intentional conceptual space of the luxury fashion sector which, I argue, consists of three major features that define its value, namely the craftwork, the original design, and the timeless expression. By defining these three, we will be better equipped to grasp the idea of creativity behind a luxury brand. Second, I will look at the critical status of luxury in light of the impact of digital technology on the aforementioned features. The focus will then be on the effects of media power activism on the acclaimed creativity of a luxury brand and the ethical issues that this activism is raising. The critical posts of Lindsey Schuyler and Tony Liu, known collectively as Diet Prada (@diet_prada), have opened up a new critical stance on duplication, racism, and cultural appropriation, provoking heated media discourse on ethical embarrassments within the fashion sector. By posting pictures of a "new" design next to photos of the original design, Diet Prada has been questioning the alleged originality of well-established brands. As Bourdieu puts it, the field of artistic production and what makes its "singularity" cannot be understood in isolation. In order to apprehend the production of value, its conditions, and singularity, we need to unravel the "whole set of agents engaged in the production of the work, or, at least, of the social value of the work."[6] Bourdieu's presumption in "Who Created the 'Creators'" concerns firstly the sociology of literature and art, but he extends it to include the world of haute couture. Indeed, this sector belongs to the field of creative production and demonstrates similar social activities, involving creators (designers), advertising, gatekeepers, consumers, and, not least today, social media.

Social media users have arguably become powerful agents that can affect the value of brands. Yet, we need to look separately at the role of the creator (the artistic director of the luxury fashion brand) and their production, and put these in relation with other creators as to the reception of creative work on social media. Bearing this in mind, the analysis will revolve around two major questions: How can we define and measure creativity in today's luxury fashion design? How has media power activism affected the artistic value of luxury fashion? The methodological framework that will enable us to answer these questions consists, on the one hand, of a critical analysis of designers' statements on the creative work in documentaries and interviews, and on the other of visual and textual analysis of posts from Instagram account Diet Prada that are relevant to this study. This chapter sets out to understand how media power activism is writing a new page in fashion history by changing its conceptual image and inner values in contemporary time.

Luxury Fashion and the Idea of Art and Craft

As a way of exploring the prevalent conditions of contemporary luxury fashion, I will begin by reconsidering the concept itself beyond the metaphysical notions of needs, desires, and superfluity,[7] and also beyond the criticism of the neoliberal politics behind it.[8] Is it a craft or could it be considered an art form? And what is the difference between the two? Richard Sennett states that "[t]he line between craft and art may seem to separate technique and expression," and since the Renaissance art has implied a larger prerogative for the subjective work, while craftwork turns to its community. While art is proof of (the artist's) unique work, craft designates collective and "continued practice." The making (the technique) is the doing of the craftspeople and the interpretation (the expression) is left to others to appraise.[9] When applying this to the aesthetics of luxury fashion, we could claim that the making belongs to the atelier, while the interpretation, similarly to art and its public, is left to the consumers.

From a luxury fashion perspective, it is clear that the making of luxury objects is by and large atelier work. It is the artisanal collective that pursues the traditional practices of the house, which leads me to consider the work of luxury fashion as craftwork. Kapferer and Bastien claim in this context that the concepts of luxury and art are sociological markers that are interrelated, having in common the concern for putting aesthetics first and functionality second. However, luxury has a low use-value (compared to its high symbolic value), while a "pure objet d'art" has none.[10]

Moving on to original design—considered here as one of the key features of luxury fashion—we could claim a priori that it derives from both art and craft. Originality or creativity[11] could, hypothetically, provoke marvel. Sennett implies in this context that a "sociological contrast" can be distinguished between "the sudden," as in an original piece of art made by one main agent, and "the slow," as in craftwork produced by "a collective agent."[12] However, I argue that this contrast is not always accurate. Even a luxury fashion piece (considered as a collective craftwork) could provoke marvel due to its innovative design. Let us remember that Dior's so-called New Look launched in 1947 was believed to be derived from the famous exclamation made by Carmel Snow, the editor-in-chief of *Harper's Bazaar*, after Monsieur Dior's debut fashion show: "It's quite a revolution, dear Christian. Your dresses have such a new look." This is "the sudden" that Sennett looks at in his inquiry, yet with no contrast to "the slow." Haute couture is a "slow" craftwork that can also have the feature of "the sudden" as a result of its aesthetic. Therefore, "sudden" and "slow" are not divergent attributes of originality but rather constitute its compelling mark. In this respect, the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode underlines the central parts of haute couture being the handmade work (the slow) and creativity (original and sudden design) of the workshops: "[Haute couture]'s primary field of interest [is] handmade work accomplished within these House's workshops, a laboratory for ideas and techniques, a space where creativity can flourish freely."[13] Gilles Lipovetsky, a philosopher and sociologist with a great interest in the phenomenon of luxury and fashion, equally stresses the role of luxury and haute couture as being "an unrivaled laboratory for novelty."[14] Novelty, as in originality or creativity, is thus a primary attribute of the luxury fashion sector and one of its fundamental values. Notwithstanding, Karpik argues that the idea of "original" requires that "there is no other like it," and that the pure form of originality is the work of art solely.[15] Applying this rigorous limitation to the luxury fashion sector would lead us to question harshly the claim of the original. In this case, luxury fashion may theoretically allege its creative fundament but would practically not always be able to fulfill it.

In an earlier study, I discussed the problematic mixture of the fields of fashion and luxury in the twenty-first century and its consequences for the culture of the brand. While fashion is by definition a trend-related and time-limited expression, luxury would imply, at least hypothetically, a durable and unseasonal design.[16] This argument joins the aspect of *timelessness* that I evoked at the outset, as luxury is an investment that ought to surpass short-lived trends. The Kelly bag for instance has been reinvented since the 1930s, yet the design remains basically the same.[17] The Chanel 2.55 bag was created by Gabrielle Chanel in 1955 but is mainly consistent in its design.

Another facet of timelessness is the repair possibilities. Quality products can be repaired and reused, and as such can contribute to a more sustainable approach in a consumption-driven world. In an interview from October 2, 2020, in *Vogue*, the artistic director of Hermès, Pierre-Alexis Dumas, brought up this specific idea of timelessness: "I remember my grandfather telling me as a kid, […] that luxury is that which you can repair." A crafted piece that does not run out of time is a piece that can be refinished and restored. "If you have a beautiful piece that's impeccably made and you take good care of it, it will last forever. That's timeless."[18]

Following this discussion, we could claim that what unites both art and craft is their expressive nature. What divides them, on the other hand, is their technique (art as an individual work versus luxury fashion as a collective atelier labor) and their market value where luxury fashion belongs to the category of craft. Finally, if the three concepts suggested earlier—craftwork, an original design, and timeless expression—constitute the trademark of a luxury house, there is also the designer or the creative director whose role is to realize them in the production.

The Value Maker

Ever since the time of the *Marchande de modes* Rose Bertin in the 1770s, and Charles Frederick Worth a century later, the designer has often been considered as an artist able to elevate and perpetuate the reputation and work of the atelier. They have also become an admired social person, a celebrity, and a tastemaker acclaimed in the press.[19] The making of luxury fashion as a craftwork is necessarily connected to the artistic supervision of the designer. The retirement speech of Yves Saint Laurent emphasized this idea in particular: "I have always placed above all the respect for this profession which is not quite an art but which needs an artist to exist."[20] Saint Laurent underlines that fashion is not completely an artform while maintaining the important role of the artist behind it. More accurately, if couture is not considered as an artform, says Saint Laurent, it at least needs an artist to invent it. This statement is both prudent and contradictory. In fact, it puts its finger on the overall unfavorable status of clothes in society: a handmade chest of drawers or a painting would mostly not be disputed for its artistic acknowledgment, whereas a handcrafted garment as in haute couture could still be called into question.

In opposition to Saint Laurent's view of the presence of an artist, Karl Lagerfeld has stated that Coco Chanel was just a "fabricant [*sic*] de legends," but at the end of the day what difference does it make since what matters is the image and the results of her great work that are still alive.[21] In other words, it is not so much the brilliant creativity of the couturier but their capacity to build a legacy of style that can persist under the banner of the couture legend. In the documentary *The First Monday in May*, Lagerfeld, in the same spirit, repeats that, "it is little boring when designers say they are artists, especially when they say it themselves […] what we do is an applied art. Chanel never said she was an artist. She was a dressmaker, Madame Vionnet was a dressmaker." Contrary to what Yves Saint Laurent said about the métier of fashion needing an artist to exist, Lagerfeld dismissed the idea of the artful designer. Another interview with him reveals the same disenchanted attitude: "In the 1930s at Jean Patou, there were Alphonsine and Marthe, the premières of the atelier who bought the sketches after being given the vague theme, […] Patou—even Gabrielle Chanel was exactly the same!—used to sit while they were presenting the sketches to him and he would say: 'take the sleeve of this, the collar of that', etc. And that is all what he did!"[22] Based on these statements, a designer appears to be the commander of the workshop who directs the theme and style of the collections while leaving the details to the rest of the community. In other words, being a designer does not necessarily entail great creativity. Clearly, Karl Lagerfeld did not have a dramatic or romantic view on fashion. His own label with the same name offers "affordable fashion" prices and represents an almost burlesque and rebellious style compared to Chanel. The exclusivity of the latter stands in contrast to the commercial scene of the former. This unaffected view of fashion, however, is far from the acclaimed creativity that the designer, in general, has been known for, as is the case par excellence in the following.

The movie *Phantom Thread* from 2017 traces the inner struggles and doubts of the haute couture designer Reynolds Woodcock, played by Daniel Day-Lewis. As couturier of the high society with prominent clientele, Woodcock is the creative genius who needs to work undisturbed and according to strict routines that no one dares to challenge. The question "Why are you not married?" from the young waitress who becomes his muse is answered with, "I make dresses." At first glance, this explanation appears to be indisputable: a dedicated couturier, considered a virtuoso of female elegance, cannot have any engagements other than his creativity. In a similar way to the real-life cases of Worth, Dior, or Balenciaga, the fictional Woodcock embodies the mythical characteristics of the (male) couturier, that is to say a creator of an original design who is backed up by a cluster of petites mains and a première.

At variance with this idealistic view of haute couture designers, Maria Grazia Chiuri, the artistic director of Dior, stated in an interview with *Madame Figaro* in 2021 that she is an incarnation of the most "uncool" designer. She is 57 years old with breasts, has two children, is married to a man, is neither thin nor fat, does not socialize with "the people," and doesn't even speak many languages. Grazia Chiuri stresses the existence of the myth of the male genius who exists in art and fashion, who gains a different recognition. This myth, she continues, is even perpetuated by women.[23] It is quite evident that, within the fashion world, most of the recognized designers to have made history are male. Coco Chanel would be one of the few whose reputation has continued long after their lifetime. From Worth to Alexander McQueen, fashion is seen as basically a male creation targeting women. Chiuri goes on to explain how it all became clear to her when she read Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise*.[24] In fact, the male protagonist of this novel, Octave Mouret, manifests the male genius who perfectly understands the inner desire of women and can therefore build up a temple for their consumption.[25]

What is problematic for the image of the designer today is the ambiguous status quo of the luxury fashion industry for whom they are working. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the luxury fashion industry still plays on the distinct socio-cultural traits of the brand, while in reality, it espouses a fashion-oriented availability. The luxury sector has adopted the fashion marketing strategies where the speed of production is central. Barthes said it best when he described fashion as resting "on a violent sensation of time," where the idea of change is central while, for luxury, as in the case of Chanel (although he did not make the distinction that I do between fashion and luxury), the idea of "long life" and the timeless "chic" constitutes a key value.[26] Today, 70 years after the intrigue of *Phantom Thread*'s 1950s London setting and 56 after Barthes´ text was published in *Marie Claire* in 1967, the twenty-first century offers novel prerequisites with two main tendencies that affect the performance of the designer: online fashion shows and the fast pace of production.

In the past, the fashion shows constituted an exclusive event for initiated people, usually fashion journalists, PR people, and celebrities. Access to the collections was therefore limited and, above all, delayed. The Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne used to give notices about the forbiddance of making sketches of the models or taking photographs, and all unauthorized publicity could be persecuted.[27] The intellectual property right of the designer and the house were highly esteemed and protected. These restrictions seem obsolete today as fashion shows are streamed online and can be watched by all in real time,[28] an availability that allows a worldwide insight into the different houses' designs and, consequently, an immediate review of the collections. This can be put in contrast with the endless restrictions that buyers of haute couture met in the 1940s who had to complete a "moral contract" to not share the designs.[29] The technological development of today has, most importantly, facilitated the easy access and instant visibility of design for all.

Beside this visibility, the pace of the collections constitutes another challenge for the designer. In the documentary film *Dior and I* from 2014, Raf Simons expresses that he deplores this issue. His departure from the house in 2016 was explained as based on "personal reasons," but behind this statement there was dissatisfaction with the fashion system and large number of runways.[30] Simons recognized the problem of velocity in an interview with the American fashion critic Cathy Horn:

> The problem is when you have only one design team and six collections, there is no more thinking time. And I don't want to do collections where I'm not thinking. In this system, Pieter and I can't sit together and brainstorm—no time. I have a schedule every day that begins at 10 in the morning and runs through the day, and every, every minute is filled.[31]

Undoubtedly, the demand for new collections every six months (two ready-to-wear, two haute couture ones, a cruise collection, and a separate show in December) cannot be beneficial for creativity. It is after all the segment of luxury fashion that is in focus here, not fast fashion. The process of the globalization of integrated economies, markets and culture has precipitated the adjustment to the demands of a worldwide market. As I have discussed elsewhere, luxury houses today are at the intersection of tradition and modernity; the idea of exclusivity and profitability. The collaborations between mass-market brands and well-established high-end fashion brands have been numerous in the twenty-first century. The marketing strategies are similar: both fashion and luxury brands conduct sales online, appealing to the global market, and both are present on social media. I have called this current penchant for "the mutual pact of fashion and luxury."[32] "Fashion became pop," says Simons in the same spirit. "I can't make up my mind if that's a good or a bad thing. The only thing I know is that it used to be elitist. And I don't know if one should be ashamed or not to admit that maybe it was nicer when it was more elitist, not for everybody. Now high fashion is for everybody."[33] Perhaps it is not only high fashion that is for everybody today, but also the power that is fostered by digital technology toward a new type of media activism focused on fashion-related issues. In light of today's technological development, it is time to revisit the acclaimed creativity of high fashion design (whether connected to a man or not) and the role that media power activism has played to affect this view.

Luxury Fashion Facing Media Power Activism

Since 2014, Diet Prada's Instagram account (@diet_prada) has offered a refreshing challenge to the fashion field. Unlike traditional fashion journalism, Diet Prada's account, with well over 3 million followers at the time of writing, sheds light on duplication, alleged racism and cultural appropriation among other things in the fashion industry. This has not gone unnoticed. *Women's Wear Daily* acknowledged in 2017 that the account is "a must follow for fashion lovers," when at the time it had 30,000 followers.[34] *The Guardian* noticed that "[w]hen future historians identify the definitive fashion moments of 2018, they will surely alight on the meteoric rise of Diet Prada."[35] This rise has certainly persisted as this account has had a decisive impact on the development of a new kind of fashion criticism. In this setting, the example of Gucci is quite illustrative.

Alessandro Michele, the creative director of the time, undoubtedly revived the image of the Italian brand by addressing Millennials and Generation Z, which led to a more than doubling of revenue and tripling of profits between 2015 and 2019.[36] For the Gucci Resort 2018 fashion collection, Michele used the design strategy of the Harlem hip-hop tailor and designer Dapper Dan. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Dapper Dan used a faux Louis Vuitton logo on the sleeves of a fur jacket at a time where it sold merely accessories. Michele followed the same procedure in 2018 but used the Gucci logo instead.

Certainly, designs taking inspiration from artists or other creators is not a new phenomenon. The work of Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Léger, and Piet Mondrian was a great source of inspiration for Yves Saint Laurent. The exhibition Balenciaga and Spanish Painting in the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid in 2019 showed the artistic heritage of El Greco, Goya, Velásquez, and Zurbarán, among others, on Balenciaga's design. For his debut for the Dior haute couture collection in 2012, Simon collaborated with the artist Sterling Ruby. Inspiration and collaboration are a sign of admiration, and in these three cases, they stem from great artists who are universally recognized. In the case of Gucci, however, we are talking about a Harlem tailor with local recognition and who was initially not referenced. The Diet Prada account did not waste any time in denouncing this blunder for its millions of followers, resulting in Michele inviting Dan to go into business with him. Diet Prada was also asked to take over Gucci's Instagram stories in 2018, which resulted in a much larger number of followers.

"The Internet and social media gave people of color a voice. So when people saw that coat that Gucci made, there was an uproar," stated Dapper Dan in an interview. In order to repair this blunder, Gucci collaborated with him and helped him to reopen his studio in Harlem that was shut down in 1992. "The most important thing that a person of color can do is to get inside, to have a seat at the table. That is the most important reason for me taking that deal," continued Dapper Dan, whose influence on hip hop and street culture has been recognized.[37]

Another example of this kind of copycatting was denounced in September 2019 by the same account, this time accusing the luxury fashion brand Balenciaga's creative director Demna Gvasalia of duplicating the "hoof" shoe made by the London-based designer Paula Canovas del Vas: "Love @balenciaga, but that's a hella specific toe shape to have magically come up with on their own lol. […] If the idea for these shoes did come from Paula Canovas del Vas, it's a bummer Demna didn't invite her to consult" (@diet_prada, September 30, 2019). Such accounts point at not only the problem of duplication but also how luxury fashion houses can freely use smaller players on the fashion scene without giving any recognition. In the past, such actions could have passed unseen, but the social media era has changed the public understanding of the ethical guidelines of a luxury brand.

Another post from Diet Prada shows two juxtaposed pictures with two models (@ diet_prada, December 17, 2019). One is wearing the original Céline outfit from the pre-fall 2018 collection while the next represents a feature from Nanushka pre-fall 2020. The similarity of the design is striking. Nanushka's suit-dress recalls the Phoebe Philo creation for Céline.

All these examples of—unintentional?—duplication show how an Instagram account with a significant number of followers can affect the public image of luxury fashion as a creative industry. Whilst Saint Laurent, Balenciaga, or Simons were inspired by art, contemporary designers are revealed to be copying from each other or smaller players on the market.

What we have seen so far is design duplications that lack a reference to the originals. Have the time pressure that Raf Simons deplored and the constant quest for novelty weakened the idea of creativity in the luxury fashion industry? The denunciations raised on social media at least point to the gravity of these issues. Copycatting is not a new phenomenon, but what is interesting here is how social media technology has enabled the instant visibility of such actions. Instagram accounts decry openly what earlier fashion magazines would have probably deemed as inappropriate. Contrary to the traditional reports on the latest collections in magazines which come with a certain time delay, Instagram accounts like Diet Prada can reveal and rebuke copycatting to an extensive amount of people.

But that is not all as the same account has denounced issues of alleged racism, like in the case of Gucci's black balaclava jumper for its fall/winter 2018 collection. Covering part of the face with large cut-out red lips, the polo neck sweater recalls racist imagery like blackface. On February 6, 2019, 9,300 people tweeted about the awkward inconvenience of this design. The following day, Gucci posted a statement of apology on Twitter saying: "We consider diversity to be a fundamental value to be fully upheld, respected, and at the forefront of every decision we make." The jumper was withdrawn from online collections and physical stores, but what remains is an offensive and prejudiced display of a garment from a luxury fashion house.

In the same way, the Italian high-fashion brand Marni became target of harsh criticism for their "Jungle Mood" campaign released in July 2020. The fashion industry watchdog Diet Prada posted images from the campaign including Black models in chains and with ethnic attributes:

> These stereotypes are just some of the ways the institution of white supremacy has oppressed, dehumanized, and deprived Black people of their human rights. For yet another fashion brand to reflect these tropes further proves the work that needs to be done to dismantle the pervasive racism throughout the world.[38]

Beside the awful impropriety of such a campaign from a high fashion brand, once again this incident puts its finger on the idea of original design. Photographing Black people in chains has strong and unavoidable references to slavery which ought to be far from any kind of innovative thinking. It is rather a maladroit experimentation that leads to a coarse view of high-fashion design.

Cultural appropriation constitutes another issue that is condemned on social media. A black jacket with gold embroidery from Alexandre Vauthier's fall 2020 collection was denounced for its style reproduction of the traditional Algerian Karakou garment. The 7,665 comments on Instagram expose this gaucherie as cultural appropriation and theft (@diet_prada, July 7, 2020). The reactions focused on the indecency of copycatting without acknowledging the original design. Vauthier's reply—"the inspiration of this model is a mix of the costume of French academicians and a treatment of embroideries which is a tribute to the oriental culture that Alexandre is particularly passionate about"[39]—did not calm reactions. Diet Prada stated that the term "oriental" is problematic per se in an American context as it is "used as a sweeping generalization for anything 'Eastern,' reducing unique cultures to a broad 'exoticism'" (@diet_prada, August 1, 2020). The duo even posted pictures of an Algerian Karakou from the 1890s, an Yves Saint Laurent haute couture creation for spring/summer 1980,[40] another picture of Yves Saint Laurent himself with Diane Vreeland wearing a Karakou-inspired jacket at the YSL 20th anniversary gala in Paris in 1982, and finally a similar inspiration from Oscar de la Renta for fall/winter 1992. While traditional fashion media reported on the themes and different looks of the collection, social media took a clear critical stance. For example, *Women's Wear Daily* reported that Vauthier "has introduced 24 looks for the season, pulling French savoir-faire into a contemporary realm."[41] *Vogue* stated that the impression of the collection in question "was one of weightlessness and insouciance […] regardless of the countless hours that went into making such confections."[42] This can be compared to the viral reactions on Instagram where so called Dieter's (followers of the account) questioned the originality of the designer, accusing him of cultural appropriation.

The case of Vauthier's embroidered jacket needs to be looked at in detail. This creation recalls the French academician's costume, the famous *habit vert,* as much as the Algerian Karakou that, in reality, dates back to the nineteenth century. Jeanne Lanvin provided the author Edmond Rostand with this costume for his entrance into the French Academy in 1903, and beside Lanvin today, houses like Pierre Balmain, Christian Lacroix, Pierre Cardin, and Stark & Sons are also suppliers of the costume. Whether the French academician costume originally had the Karakou as its inspiration is not the core issue here. What is most interesting is how social media activism challenges the idea of the creative designer and distrusts the respectable realm of the craftwork of luxury.

The brand Tory Burch faced a similar accusation of cultural appropriation when Diet Prada posted their new sweater, which appeared to be identical to the *camisoles poveiras* worn by Portuguese fisherman from Póvoa de Varzim. Diet Prada's sharp review said that, "When she's not busy colonizing the mall, her designer team is apparently out garnering inspo from the rest of the globe"(@diet_prada, March 25, 2021). In the same post, the account referred to the mayor of Póvoa de Varzim, who posted a message on Facebook accusing Tory Burch of, "not recognizing one of the main pieces of Portuguese handicrafts." Yet it is primarily the incredible reach that Diet Prada has among social media users that means that stories of cultural appropriation of this kind become a serious accusation. What is more, the brand did not make an effort to check on the origin of the garment, as it called it a "Baja-inspired tunic," which is Mexican rather Portuguese. The apology from Tory Burch for wrongly attributing the sweater and that they were working with Póvoa de Varzim to "rectify this error" seems to have fallen at the first fence. Ultimately, the sweater from the spring 2021 collection was no longer available on the brand's website.[43]

Counterfeit and Creativity from a Historical Point of View

The duplication of design is not new to the twenty-first century. Reproduction of luxury fashion designs has a rather long history of legal battles, particularly in France. The distinctiveness of the luxury sector lies in its meticulous work and claim to originality, and therefore its resistance to duplication. Yet the business of luxury, including the couture sector, has not always been acknowledged separately from ready-to-wear. Starting in 1868, both haute couture and ready-to-wear belonged to the same trade association, and it was not until 1910 that couture became an autonomous profession under the name Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne.[44] This was an important starting point for the distinction between the two businesses, and not least between their different guidelines. Remarkably, even today we speak uniformly of "fashion" without paying attention to its different categories and the different conditions of each and everyone.[45]

During the first half of the twentieth century, the burgeoning desire of the international market pressed French couture to authorize the legal reproduction of their designs, albeit under limited conditions.[46] Most of the clients came from New York, which intensified the contact between this city and Paris. The divergence of the view on fashion between the two cultures is quite interesting. While French couturiers have been looked at as artists ever since the advent of Charles Fredrick Worth in the middle of the nineteenth century, the American view during the interwar years was based on the practical character of fashion. The attempts of the American register of copyrights, attorneys, and members of Congress to extend copyright law to fashion, as for other arts, failed. The resistance came from other members of Congress and the National Retail Dry Goods Association (NRDGA) and its department-store members on the grounds that the Paris designers would then concentrate their power and that fashion design which should be democratic and accessible for everyone in America. The French outlook on this matter is different as French law did not establish a distinction between fine art, as in paintings, and applied art, as in fashion. In other words, both were considered as art.[47]

Copying has always been a problem for the luxury fashion business. Early on, in the 1880s, designers had their models photographed as a way of protecting their creations. During the 1930s, American buyers were accused of selling sketches to manufacturers and many legal battles against piracy were fought.[48] Finally, as a way of reinforcing the French protection of fashion, a copyright law was assumed in 1902 where no merit distinction was made between a work of art and applied art. In addition, the law of 1952 strengthened the fashion sector by establishing a "severe" system of penalty.[49] Thus, even today, and in contrast to American copyright law that does not cover fashion, the French one offers a legal support to fashion "as high art."[50] Certainly, the term "fashion" here does not refer to any kind of clothing production, but in particular, the high-end and luxury sector based on creative design and highly qualitative sewing techniques and materials.

Amusingly enough in this respect, Gucci's new collection for autumn/winter 2021 was quite emblematic of this issue. The "Fake/Not" motif plays on the idea of counterfeiting of design where each piece contains the word "Fake" on one side and "Not" on the other. A similar action was taken in 2017 where the word "Gucci" was replaced with the misspelled name "Guccy." Here, the Italian brand counteracted a big problem by choosing to possess it, while adding a cheerful touch to it.

Dethroning the Value of High Fashion

It is perhaps with the help of Bourdieu and his analysis of the field of artistic production that we might better understand the aura of the highest segment of clothing production that makes counterfeiting both compelling and understandable. Despite some of Bourdieu's by-now outdated claims on the fashion field, his major understanding of its principles is still valuable. An objet d'art, he says, is marked as such because of the signature of its creator, and not least because of the "consecrated place" in which the object is displayed: "The creator's signature is a mark that changes not the material culture but the social nature of the object." And it is not the rarity of the product itself that constitutes the power of the name but "the rarity of the producer" represented by the signature or the designer label.[51] The work of fashion belongs to the field of cultural production (and doubtlessly the economic one as well) as much as it is part of the consumption field where mutual social interactions between the two are capital. The role of the designer is to create the field of production in order to engage with the consumers. As a producer of the culture of clothing, they constitute the authority of the brand. This is what makes "the rarity" of their persona that Bourdieu aims at. Accusations of duplication and racism directed towards the creative director of a brand thus become defamatory and quite subversive when they go viral on social media. What is at stake today is the belief in the value of the creativity of the label—what Bourdieu calls "the signature." The power of the designer is challenged by the power of social media activism. While counterfeits and duplications used to be business-driven issues, essentially involving the theft of design from the part of smaller players on the market,[52] today we can see the reverse situation. It appears that the creativity of well-established and respected designers implies the free utilization of smaller player's talent. It is an ethical dilemma that we seem to face today in this creative industry. The difference between the historical and contemporary theft of design lies not only in this evidence but equally in the discourse of social media activism that denounces the unethical behavior of the luxury fashion industry.

We need also to bear in mind that the realm of the higher segment of sartorial production has its own traditions where the ideas of craft, originality, and timelessness, as I suggested at the outset, are fundamental. Every specific object deriving from the label carries all the values that the house is known for. The social, cultural, and economic values of Gucci, Balenciaga, or Vauthier, to name but a few, lay in their ability to create novel designs that may appear as "sudden" in their original expression. An elaborated technique is another feature that marks the atelier of the esteemed brands. The aspect of timelessness is at the heart of the qualitative pieces that can be restored. Luxury is more specifically the combination of aesthetics with intricate manufacturing. But what happens when well-established luxury fashion brands are caught duplicating one another or lesser-known actors on the fashion scene, or usurping cultural symbols? And how can the aesthetic vision of an artistic director justify racist reminders? I initially asked the question of how we can define and measure creativity today. One way is by looking at what creativity is not. Through the history of fashion, designers such as Rose Bertin, Madeleine Vionnet, and Yves Saint Laurent prospered in their ability to create new expressions, new visions that would evolve the perception of the clothed body. They certainly addressed the elite as their work belonged to "the field of artistic production" in the sense that it was a craftwork that could offer an original design and that had a history. Today, high fashion brands seem to ignore the principles of creative design, leaning instead on other designer's ideas and forms or other cultures freely, and without crediting them.

Yet these actions would perhaps not have been brought to light without the acquired power of social media. The critical posts of the Instagram account Diet Prada have exposed failure in the codes of conduct for an industry that relies on its creative ability and the high social value of its products. When the first aspect fails in its goal, the second will lose its meaning, and finally, the luxury houses will need to ask themselves the question of whether they can still claim a superior value.

Conclusion

The term "luxury fashion" is used to designate the higher segment of clothing and accessories in the fashion industry. Yet there is no clear understanding of its characteristics and supposed values. I, therefore, suggested, at a first level, to see its similarities with the notion of art and its affiliation with the idea of craft. Three major aspects could be distinguished: the craftwork, the original design, and the timeless expression—all indicators of creativity. In all this, the role of the designer, regardless of their diverse views on their creative vein, maintains a crucial position as the authority of the luxury brand. At a second level, I explored how this creativity in the luxury fashion sector has been seen by the social media activist account Diet Prada. Revelations of the duplication of design, racism, and cultural appropriation appear to be recurrent critical features on this account which has millions of followers. The frequent and ongoing critical media discourse affects the public opinion of a socially and financially valued global industry. The fundamental elements of craftwork and timelessness resonate badly with a speedy cycle of production and a rather desperate quest for novelties, turning out, in the end, to be ethically ill-fitted with the social value of the brands.

There is a paradox in the concept of luxury fashion in the twenty-first century. While the term itself points to refinement and originality, the duplications and absence of ethics drain it of its essence. Pierre Bergé, the lifelong companion of Yves Saint Laurent, declares in the documentary *L'amour fou* that Yves's decision to leave the house in 2002 was reasonable. Fashion, according to Saint Laurent, had become "un métier livré aux commerçants" ("a profession delivered to merchants"). Saint Laurent's view seems to be more correct than ever. The "social nature" of the luxury object has drained away. While the word "luxury" signals a privileged world of genuine craftsmanship, the actions of its masters display a lack of rules of conduct in a globalized world. Most important here has been seeing how media activism has gained a considerable power that affects the view of this alleged creative industry. Social media activism writes a new, less flattering chapter in the recognized and not least globalized history of luxury fashion.

Notes

1 Paula von Wachenfeldt, "Communicating Seduction: Luxury Fashion Advertisements in Video Campaigns," *Studies in Communication Sciences* 18, no. 2 (2018): 353–63.

2 I have shown how the abundant exposure of branded products and post lifestyles on Instagram and a reality TV show expels the signification of the luxury object as a distinct and crafted object, and turns it into kitsch. See Paula von Wachenfeldt, "The Mediation of Luxury Brands in Digital Storytelling," *Fashion Theory* 25, no. 1 (2019): 99–118.

3 Armitage and Roberts consider the term "luxury fashion" as "part of the discourse of mass culture," acknowledging the ambiguity of its status that can be open for different interpretations.

They view it in light of a postmodern globalization that uses different technologies for homogenous visual representations of luxury. See "The Globlisation of Luxury Fashion: The Case of Gucci," *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption* 6, no. 3 (2019): 227–46.

4 Agnès Rocamora, "Mediatization and Digital Media in the Field of Fashion," *Fashion Theory* 21, no. 5 (2017): 505–22.

5 von Wachenfeldt, "Mediation of Luxury Brands."

6 Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 140–3.

7 Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

8 John Armitage and Joanne Roberts, "Critical Luxury Studies: Defining a Field," in *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media*, edited by John Armitage and Joanne Roberts (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 1–21.

9 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (London: Penguin, 2009), 65–6.

10 J.-N. Kapferer and V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands* (London, Philadelphia: Kogan Page Ltd, 2012), 32–3.

11 Sennett prefers to use the word "originality" instead of "creativity" as he believes that the latter is loaded with "Romantic baggage." See *Craftsman*, 290. I don't find this possible connotation as problematic, as there is certainly an air of romanticism in all kinds of creation. I, therefore, use both terms.

12 Sennett, *Craftsman*, 73.

13 See the website of Fédération de la haute couture et de la mode, https://www.fhcm.paris/en/our-history

14 Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 56.

15 Lucien Karpik, *Valuing the Unique: The Economics of Singularities* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 17.

16 Paula von Wachenfeldt, "The Myth of Luxury in a Fashion World," *Fashion, Style and Popular Culture* 5, no. 3 (2018): 313–28.

17 This purse was formerly named Sac à dépêches in the 1930s, and Princess Grace Kelly used it to hide the early signs of her pregnancy from the paparazzi. In 1977 it was officially renamed Kelly in honor of the film star and Princess.

18 Luke Leitch, "The Philosophy of the Future: In Conversation with Pierre-Alexis Dumas, Artistic Director of Hermès," *Vogue*, October 2, 2020, https://www.vogue.com/article/hermes-pierre-alexis-dumas-interview.

19 Christopher Breward, *Fashion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 21–47; Didier Grumbach, *History of International Fashion* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2014), 22.

20 My translation: "J'ai toujours placé au-dessus de tout le respect de ce métier qui n'est pas tout à fait un art mais qui a besoin d'un artiste pour exister." See *Le discours d'adieu d'Yves Saint Laurent lu par Etienne Guillou,* https://umanz.fr/essentiels/14/01/2021/le-iscours-dadieu-dyves-saint-laurent-lu-par-etienne-guillou.

21 *Coco by Karl – Inside Chanel*. YouTube. 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2B5kxdf7Ev8.

22 My translation: "Dans les années 1930 chez Jean Patou, c'étaient Alphonsine et Marthe, les premières d'atelier, qui achetaient les croquis après qu'on leur a donné vaguement le theme, […] Patou—mais Gabrielle Chanel, c'était pareil!—restait assis tandis qu'elles présentaient les toiles et il disait: 'Prenez la manche de ça, le col de celle-là,' etc. Et c'est tout ce qu'il faisait!" Hélène Guillaume, "Pourquoi la mode doit se réinventer," *Le Figaro*, September 25, 2018, https://www.lefigaro.fr/lifestyle/2018/09/25/30001–20180925ARTFIG00026-pourquoi-la-mode-doit-se-reinventer.php.

23 The original text: "Le génie est masculin, n'est-ce pas? Ce cliché a la vie dure. Cette idée qu'un homme a du génie mais pas une femme, il existe dans l'art, dans la mode […] Et le pire, c'est que même les femmes y croient!" Maria Grazia Meda, "Maria Grazia Chiuri avec sa fille Rachele: 'J'incarne la designer la plus uncool par excellence. J'ai 57 ans, deux enfants, je suis mariée,'" *Madame Le Figaro*, May 21, 2021, https://madame.lefigaro.fr/style/maria-grazia-chiuri-sa-fille-rachele-regini-notre-pacte-changer-le-systeme-de-interieur-140521-196505.

24 Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise* (Oxford: 1883/2008).

25 Paula von Wachenfeldt, "Kvinnlig emancipation eller förslavande konsumtion i varuhushandeln hos Zola?" ["Female Emancipation or Enslaving Consumption in Zola?"], in *Kommers. Historiska handelsformer I Norden under 1700- och 1800-talen/Commerce* [*Historical Trade Forms in the North During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*], edited by Gudrun Andersson and Klas Nyberg (Uppsala: Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia 42, 2010), 181–93.
26 Roland Barthes, *The Language of Fashion* (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 100.
27 Grumbach, *History of International Fashion*, 103.
28 See, for example, the site nowfashion.com where runways can be watched in real time. At the time of writing, the pandemic shock of Covid-19 has destabilized the whole luxury fashion industry, which had to move more or less completely online, though this process had started before the pandemic.
29 Grumbach, *History of International Fashion*, 91.
30 Miles Socha, "Raf Simons to Exit Dior," *Women's Wear Daily*, October 22, 2015, https://wwd.com/fashion-news/designer-luxury/raf-simons-exit-dior-10267081.
31 Cathy Horyn, "Raf Simons Speaks to Cathy Horyn on the Speed of Fashion," *Business of Fashion*, November 6, 2015, https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/news-analysis/bof-exclusive-raf-simons-i-dont-want-to-do-collections-where-im-not-thinking.
32 von Wachenfeldt, "The Myth of Luxury."
33 Horyn, "Raf Simons Speaks."
34 Alexa Tietjen, "Eyes on Diet Prada." *Women's Wear Daily*, October 5, 2017. https://wwd.com/eye/lifestyle/diet-prada-instagram-11020510.
35 Hannah Marriott, "Diet Prada: The Instagram Account that Airs the Fashion Industry's Dirty Laundry," *The Guardian*, May 22, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2018/may/22/diet-prada-the-instagram-account-that-airs-the-fashion-industrys-dirty-laundry.
36 Silvia Aloisi and Sarah White, "Gucci Stumbles as Kering Gears up for Brand's 100th Year," *Reuters*, February 17, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kering-results/sales-at-kerings-gucci-luxury-brand-fall-on-covid-19-hit-idUSKBN2AH0KH?edition-redirect=uk.
37 Max Bartick, "Dapper Dan Talks About Going from the Underground to Gucci," *Vogue,* September 17, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESHe_pA7XEE.
38 @diet_prada, July 28, 2020.
39 My translation: "L'inspiration de ce modèle est un mix en le costume des académiciens français et un traitement de broderies qui est un hommage à la culture orientale qu'Alexandre Affectionne (with a captital A, sic) particulièrement."
40 This YSL creation seemingly presented a Thai look rather than an Algerian one.
41 Mimosa Spencer, "Alexandre Vauthier Couture Fall 2020," *Women's Wear Daily*, July 7, 2020, https://wwd.com/runway/fall-couture-2020/paris/alexandre-vauthier/review.
42 Tina Isaac-Goizé, "Alexandre Vauthier Fall 2020 Couture," *Vogue Runway*, July 7, 2020, https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2020-couture/alexandre-vauthier
43 The list of accusations of cultural appropriation is ongoing. Another example can be found in Louis Vuitton's blue and white scarf somehow recalling the Palestinian black and white one called the Keffiyeh. Diet Prada posted an extract from Wikipedia showing the meaning of this accessory and commenting as follows: "So LVMH's stance on politics is 'neutral,' but they're still making a $705 logo-emblazoned keffiyeh, which is a traditional Arab headdress that's become a symbol of Palestinian nationalism. Hmmmm …" Instagram, (@diet_prada, June 1, 2021).
44 Grumbach, *History of International Fashion*, 31.
45 Earlier, I suggested distinguishing between four categories in the apparel industry: mass-market fashion, ready-to-wear, high-end fashion and luxury, where the two latter are commonly intertwined. See von Wachenfeldt, "The Myth of Luxury in a Fashion World", 315.
46 Véronique Pouillard, "Design Piracy in the Fashion Industries of Paris and New York in the Interwar Years," *Business History Review* 85, no. 2 (2011): 320.
47 Ibid., 321, 322, 331, 332.
48 M. L. Stewart, "Copying and Copyrighting Haute Couture: Democratizing Fashion, 1900–1930s," *French Historical Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 103–30, 116–17, 111–12.
49 See https://www.senat.fr/rap/l05-308/l05-3085.html.
50 Pouillard, "Design Piracy," 343.
51 Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, 147–8.

52 Luxury houses often file suits against counterfeit and theft. These kinds of illegal action will always constitute a serious problem for the luxury fashion industry for as long as there is a profit to be made by using the brand's name for the unauthorized use of production and selling. Chanel had one in 2018 against the high-end fashion online consignment store The RealReal, accusing them of selling at least seven counterfeit handbags. See *The Fashion Law*, November 16, 2018, https://www.thefashionlaw.com/chanel-is-suing-the-realreal-for-allegedly-selling-counterfeit-bags

Another example is Salvatore Ferragamo teaming up with Amazon to file actions against two commercial entities and four individuals for selling counterfeit Ferragamo products. See *The Fashion Law*, February 21, 2021, https://www.thefashionlaw.com/amazon-files-two-new-counterfeit-suits-against-marketplace-setllers-this-time-with-salvatore-ferragamo.

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Part IV

The Body and the Self

20 Sport from Mr and Mrs Andrews Circa 1750 to Dior x Air Jordan 1

Jean Williams

Introduction: The Sartorial Sporting Moment

What does it tell us about the connection between sport, fashion, and dress history when, at the January 2021 inauguration of president of the United States, Joe Biden, and his Vice President Kamala Harris, a pair of Dior x Air Jordan 1 s caused a media furore, not because they were out of context, but because they were one of the rarest, and most desired shoes of 2020?[1] Nikolas Ajagu attended this auspicious event, to watch his aunt-in-law, Kamala Harris, get sworn in as the first female, first African-American, and first Asian-America vice president. He wore what became known as the "Diordan" shoes; fashion items that blended high-end, black-entrepreneur led sporting streetwear, and high couture. At $2,000 sale price, and worth considerably more in re-sale, the Dior 1 s were not exactly the populist choice, and the Air Dior Collection was not intended as such. But compared with the outgoing Trump regime's use of ostentatious and unsophisticated wealth in lieu of intelligent political legitimacy, the shoe had its own history as part of basketball player Michael Jordan's wider mediation as a sporting icon, now worth an estimated $1.5 billion.[2]

Recent work has argued the need to de-fetishize fashion, look beyond the materiality of the clothes and unpick the symbolic moment, of which the Ajagu Dior x Air Jordan 1's epitomize.[3] Certainly, the Bourdieu and Delsaut argument of 1975, which polarized young, progressive, cheap, fast fashion from older, conservative, luxury, heritage brands seemed to require revision.[4] Unarguably, Jordan, as an entrepreneur, has made more money since 1984 from the line of shoes that bear his name, than he ever did from his sporting career. The first sales in 1985 were expected to make $3 million, and actually achieved in excess of $125 million.[5] Air Jordans are by their nature aspirational: they literally sell air, especially through the logo, with its winged basketball, the idea of flight, and, ultimately, transcendence. What the shoes sell is impossible to achieve. That is the appeal. Like most athlete-branded sportswear, if the average player in a pick-up game cannot actually "be like Mike" as another of his branded endorsements with Gatorade promised, they can buy products that will make them feel like they "might" be.[6]

So Ajagu's choice of footwear confirmed a global moment of political transformational change, in that African-American sporting identity has now been widely espoused by mainstream global luxury brands as world-leading. White kids aspire to expensive training shoes endorsed by African-American athletes, as do high-profile celebrities. Moreover, the occasion of the Biden-Harris inauguration would again reaffirm the progressive rhetoric of Democratic leadership, as it had previously with the historic two terms of Barack Obama. The symbolism of African-American political and cultural

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leadership was casually—and presumably comfortably—on show for the world to see, in a pair of sneakers.

The methodology of this chapter examines the links between the visual symbolism of clothing at a precise historical moment, specifically what leisure or sporting wear denotes at a specific moment in time. Particularly, a modern phrase "athleisure" denotes wearing sporting garments in one's moments of recreation, including attending in this case the inauguration of a US president, as a family guest, as having a much longer history than is generally acknowledged. I argue in this case, the phenomenon goes back to at least 1750. The geographical scope is mainly UK and US focused, in the sources that have been used but supply chains are global, and require nuance.

This global supply chain is not without contestation. In terms of sustainability, the systems of production, and of long-term effects for the environment, fashion can be a good example of commodity fetishism: sharing with sport the narrative of continuous innovation and improvement or "the next big thing" can mask systems and processes that are harmful for the planet, animals and for people. The production chains, especially exploiting the global south, east, Africa, and Asia, for the benefit of the global north, west, Europe, and the Americas can be opaque behind the marketing of those goods. Historians have set to the task of researching the economic history of fashion ecosystems, and in terms of Nike, have been critical since the 1980s.[7] Nike's production practices led to outsourcing of their manufacturing to countries including Indonesia, China, and Vietnam, with workers paid as little as \$3.50 per day, over a six-day week.[8]

The disparity of economic exploitation in relation to luxury goods, and fast fashion can mean that money saved on production could be used in aggressive marketing campaigns, meaning buying the products becomes a form of post-colonial exploitation.[9] Until 1998, the company merely increased its marketing budgets to avert criticisms of wages as low as \$0.15 per hour, it became apparent that, in order to pay a living wage, it was quite possible to pass on the consumer the cost of raising wages to basic living means. In short, someone who is willing to pay £200 for trainers would be willing to pay £210, and even £220, hence providing a living wage in countries where a few dollars makes a considerable difference to life chances, such as Cambodia. Although since Nike addressed some of these concerns in 2000, its image has improved, it still has problems with both environmental and ethical leadership not entirely resolved by its attempts at Corporate Social Responsibility since the 1998 boycotts of its products, as Zwolinski has shown.[10] Collaboration with Dior is part of that trajectory. Both Dior and Jordan are keen to emphasize that none of these exploitative practices were used in their 2020 collaboration. It is the first Jordan model to be crafted entirely in Italy in over 30 years—since the Air Jordan 2 s in 1986. Using Italian leather, with painted edges and special stitching, the hard sole is transparent with a different printed logo on each foot; the Air Dior Wings and the Dior logo. And so, a remaining question is, how unique are your very rare training shoes? The high tops were issued in a limited edition of 8,500 to reflect Jordan's 1985 heritage, each with a unique identifier. As Alice Cary of Vogue UK argued in her coverage of the inauguration, while a limited edition of 4,700 low top edition refers to Christian Dior's fabled New Look of 1947. Now officially the most expensive Jordan's of all time, a pair of sneakers at a Presidential inauguration convey a fusion, and perhaps a confusion, of messages.

Sport and costume history then are both primarily concerned with bodily practice and embodied experience: whether that be production, design, manufacture, retail, or consumption. How bodies are adorned, embellished and clothed (or revealed) highlights the hybrid nature of dress history, encompassing as it does the everyday clothing solutions of the mass of people and the unusual, ceremonial, and elite high fashion. Lots of people pull on something comfortable to go for a slow jog around their local park, while the release of rare items, such as time-limited "drops" of designer trainers, means that most will never be worn, and are more valuable as commodities than as items of clothing. It is not the intention of this discussion to primarily approach this as an economic history, but to look at how certain moments shape ideas of modernity and foreground sports and leisurewear.

As ideas of leisure have themselves changed, and new kinds of less formal dressing have become popular, the rise of sportswear and leisure clothing has become widely available in haute couture. This article takes a revisionist history to the idea that this is a twenty-first-century phenomenon to push back the historiography to an early modern period, in which leisure became a marker of wealth amongst a growing middle class, and these Anglocentric ideas traveled to the United States along with British migrants. Leisure as a marker of status is not a new phenomenon. The roots of dressing for sport and leisure are ancient, and imbued with symbolic, moral, and political signifiers. The literature for sporting wear and fashion has been led on the one hand by authors analysing the "American Look" such as Patrician Campbell Warner, Rebecca Arnold and curators at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York.[11] Other authors argue the centrality of French haute couture in popularizing sport, as part of a wider modernity, from swimwear to specific fashion houses such as Chanel being credited with being the first in their runway shows of including leisurewear in 1920.[12] Rather than a Franco-American transatlantic phenomenon, this chapter argues that sportswear was more nuanced in its inflections, and the British, particularly the diaspora story, has been relatively neglected, and particularly before the twentieth century.[13] Although Goodrum has argued that contemporary Britishness is an important way to sell fashion, this chapter argues that British fashion has been articulated through a much longer history, and it is this association with monarchy, pageantry, and the disruption of ancestry through a self-made ethos that has been hitherto neglected.[14]

However, part of the aesthetic, is that Britain has a deeply contested history of sport and access to leisure. Well before the monarch Charles 1 was executed by the Parliamentarians in 1649, he had defended the right of the common people to sport and pleasure after Sunday religious observance. This was replaced in 1653 by the Puritans, who led not a monarchy but a Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland) unified the British Isles under the personal rule of Oliver Cromwell and briefly his son Richard until 1659. The Puritans eschewed pleasure and leisure, and it was only with the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, with Charles II that the "Merry Monarch" again defended the right of the ordinary people to their fun, and pastimes. So a moral and religious element has always inflected British sport and leisure pursuits, and clothing the body appropriately had long been contentious.

Almost 400 years earlier, Dame Juliana Berners, a member of the Order of Saint Benedict, published a treatise on fishing, hunting, fowling, and hawking in 1486, it became one of the earliest examples of sporting literature in the printed word.[15] Juliana Berners, high born and educated, enjoyed field sports, including fishing, as part of her status before joining Sopwell Nunnery, near St Albans for the remainder of her life. She authored *Treatyse on Fysshynge wyth an Angle,* a how-to fishing manual showing what to wear, and how to make a rod and line, which advised that long life and good health followed from moderate exercise, happy contemplation, and a moderate diet. Berners therefore gave a moral dimension to sport and leisure as an embodied and spiritual practice, in nature. It is a reminder that sport and fashion have a long and deep history globally.

Berners also gave one of the first printed texts on how to manufacture fishing lines from dyed human hair, with detailed instructions as to how to produce each shade of color, and when these might be used in the annual cycle to catch different fish. For this reason, in my edited collection of 2016, I called the work *Kit: Fashioning the Body for Sport*, because it refers to the twin processes by which the human body is honed, shaped, demonstrated in time and displayed in a sporting space, but also dressed, covered, and revealed through complex clothing strategies.[16] Human hair can be a practical fishing tool, as well as a personal accessory.

In contrast, I have argued in previous work on the history of football boots that Henry VIII ordered a pair of football boots from the Great Wardrobe in 1526, the office responsible for supplying his clothes, and played the game with young nobles of his royal court who were called his henchmen. The handmade leather was thicker than normal footwear, cost four shillings, and were stitched together by Cornelius Johnson, Henry VIII's official cordwainer. According to contemporary writer Sir Thomas Elyot folk football lacked rules, fair play and was a violent game of beastly fury, more befitting the lower classes than aristocrats. Its choice as an activity by the king was therefore probably down to the quality for which Henry VIII, a man who had six wives, is perhaps best known: virility. As a marker of manliness, Henry was a keen all-rounder who enjoyed playing tennis, hunting and fencing. So his extensive range of clothing reflected both his excessive appetite for enjoyment in all its forms, and symbolic highly competitive leadership, and setting the masculine tone of his Royal court. In addition to the football boots, he also ordered two pairs of shoes for fencing and 37 pairs of velvet shoes.[17]

Similarly, I have argued that Olympic tradition was a marker of quality, and prestige, not necessarily a replica of the ancient Greek Games. As has been outlined, sport was contested as part of the right of the common man, and woman, to enjoy themselves when work was done. The various forms of "Olimpick," "Ho-Limpyc," "Olympian," and "Olympiad" festivals were part of a wider engagement with the philosophies and practices of the ancient Pan-Hellenic Olympic games.[18] For instance, from 1612 to 1642, Robert Dover reinvented the folk Cotswold Games as annual "Olimpick" celebrations of sport and, to an extent, culture. Women were integral to the events, and this was contentious because James I had defended the right of respectable leisure, after worship on a Sunday particularly, in The Book of Sports, formally known as the Declaration for Sports, in May 1618. In 1633, it was reaffirmed by Charles I in the face of increased Puritan influence, especially against Catholic gentry. Dover's heritage was Catholic, and his games included archery, dancing, leaping, hare coursing, and shin kicking. Women participated and benefitted from many industries around early modern sport and leisure such as ale, and guest houses, the food and drink industries, and in clothing manufacture. A woodcut from the time clearly shows women as integral to the festivities. [19]

The connection of bodily practices with spiritual and ethical values continued. Much of this involved the celebration of human interaction with nature and, by extension, the divine principles that crafted a harmonious environment. However, this could be disrupted by man-made conflicts such as the English Civil Wars, and prohibition remained in place until Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660.

Thereafter, blood sports for the upper classes, and pugilism, swimming and pedestrianism for the masses linked countryside and city. Costumes, styles and fabrics conventionally worn in one context were paraded in others; part of pomp and pomposity.

To "sport" clothing, for rural and urban life, increasingly became part of the English language. To "disport" also had sexual meanings, linked with play and other bodily practices. After 1850, modern sport was born. Thereafter, blood sports such as bull-baiting in city centers decreased, human games became less violent, and the idea of "fair play" became more widespread. In Birmingham's main shopping centre in the West Midlands of England, the term *Bullring* is still used to brand the shopping mall, a reference to these earlier pastimes. These processes were slow and uneven but we can see their beginnings in a painting of young people in their favorite leisure clothes.

Mr and Mrs Andrews circa 1750

It is possible to trace a modern British aesthetic for sports clothing and related goods to the early Gainsborough masterpiece, *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, painted circa 1750.[20] A fashionable conversation piece, the composition of the painting was based on the convention of a portrait of two people, out of doors. Relatively unusual compared with the court portraits of monarchs, and the family portraits of aristocrats, it was also an unprecedented announcement of wealth and leisure. Although frozen in a single moment, the Andrews, we are given to understand have time to spare, and to enjoy.

As the National Gallery information to accompany the image, located at the reference above indicates, the painting was begun soon after the marriage of Robert Andrews and Frances Carter of Ballingdon House, near Sudbury, the painting showcases the newly wed couple enjoying their expanded estate. The arrangement to marry Robert and Frances had been made several years before by the families of the two young people, since Mr Andrews senior was of the landed gentry, but not an aristocrat. So it is also a portrait of youth, and a celebration of the combined wealth of the two families, at the start of a marriage. Not only do the newlyweds have time to enjoy, and accessorize their youth, symbolized by the dog and gun in the picture, but they have the rest of their lives to which to look forward.

Although the fabric in Robert's clothing appears shiny by today's tastes, it is a very manly and business-like image. Andrews has a gun under his arm, and, with his dog at his side, is presenting himself as a sportsman, allowing Gainsborough to paint swathes of naturalistic scenery around him, still a novelty in artistic circles. We do not see him actively hunting, but the accoutrements of the lifestyle make a statement that he could, if he so wished. *Mr and Mrs Andrews* is an image of the virile landowner, and his compelling wife, enjoying considerable leisure, and dressed accordingly. Without an aristocratic bloodline, but with considerable wealth and resources, it indicates a wider shift in social relations among the sporting elite.

One of the defining aspects of sports clothing in the Georgian era was class-based systems of dress. Loose enough to defy neat categorization, "sport" could encompass ideas, products, morality, and conventions. The works of Pierce Egan, and, later, R. S. Surtees linked fashion with manliness and sophistication.[21] Like Robert Andrews, men would wear their rural gear in the city, to show that they had an estate, and their urban clothes at dinner in the country while they entertained their friends.

The rise in field and water sports for the upper classes, and pugilism, swimming and pedestrianism for the masses linked countryside and city. Horse racing enabled those who could own horses and pay for jockeys to wear their silks, to display wealth for the commoners who came to bet as a day out, and the wealthy who sat in covered stands enjoying hospitality and liked a wager. Another contributory factor in sportswear becoming modish was elite adoption of a given style or an endorsement from one of the many British public schools. The ultimate event at which to see and be seen for the British upper class, the Season, was a complex round of sporting entertainment from spring to fall. These ranged from racing at Ascot and Goodwood to the Eton and Harrow cricket match at Lords; the Henley Regatta and yachting at Cowes. The Royal Enclosure at Ascot remained very exclusive, with no more than a hundred stylish ladies attending on horseback in 1875.[22]

Costumes, styles and fabrics conventionally worn in one context were paraded in others; part of pomp and pomposity. To "sport" clothing, for rural and urban life, increasingly became part of the English language. Ladies "Ascot dresses" were worn as aspirational items in which the personality of the wearer was judged but not necessarily worn at the races. As I have argued in the Introduction to Kit, more significantly, for both men and women from the 1860s, the Norfolk jacket became an item adapted from its original tweed version to those worn in town. For sport the Norfolk jacket was infantilized for young boys, worn with knickerbocker shorts. Undressing for sport had its own significant pre-history, helped by folk customs of the carnivalesque and disreputable elements.

Like Robert Smith, the landowning aristocracy and gentry were effectively rural capitalists and it was their daily, working dress that became display with sporting life as an eighteenth-century "uniform." This British aesthetic started out with producers manufacturing solutions to the challenging unpredictability of the British weather. Riding clothes in muted tones of warm wool became the standard wear of the upper-class gentleman, although the Victorian obsession with compartmentalization also played a big part in speeding up the demand for fashionable items to suit an increasingly diverse range of occasions.[23]

Robert Smith wore his shiny coat at a key point in the establishment of modern sport. Historically, international industries, sport, dress and fashion share an ambulatory, transnational history, translating ideas across contexts and continents as much as goods, and labor. As I have argued in the history of football boot design, different stages of the internationalization, and then the globalization, of fashion have often ignored the role of the British, who largely codified modern sport from the middle of the eighteenth century, such as the Jockey Club, formed in 1750, and Marylebone Cricket Club formed in 1787, to formation of the Football Association in 1863, and the Amateur Athletic Association, formed in 1880. Although sports clubs existed in France and America, as well as other parts of the world at this time, the governing bodies of sport who codified their disciplines under written rules were largely British in origin. These rules often stipulated what could and could not be worn on the field of play. The original FA Laws of the Game stipulated in its 13th rule: "No player shall wear projecting nails, iron plates, or gutta percha on the soles or heels of his boots."[24]

The Move to Mass Production of High-End Goods

British clothing and sports brands began to diversify in tailor-made designs at the luxury end of the market from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Tailor-made gear was already established at the top end of the market, but selling cheaper ready-to-wear to the expanding middle classes expanded largely after 1850, as sport itself became modernized. After trade-marking a shower-proof textile in 1853, the company of John Emery became "Aqua-scutum," the Latin for water-shield, following which its wrappers and coats became modish for the urban elite but also for field sports and angling. Thomas

Burberry formed his eponymous company as a 21-year-old Hampshire tailor in 1856, launching a stylish gabardine fabric in 1880 and registering his brand logo as a trademark in 1900. Ralph Slazenger Moss, anglicized his name after he began to trade as a rainwear business in Manchester in 1881, moved to London, and, as Slazenger, trademarked its lawn tennis rackets and balls, which gained added international status by becoming standard equipment at Wimbledon.[25]

Wimbledon, for instance began life as All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club; Worple Road in 1877 hosting its annual international championships, before becoming the Lawn Tennis Association in 1888. Croquet and tennis were probably the first mass sportswear worn as leisurewear, when young men wore their rubber bottomed, canvas shoes with their whites as part of a dashing look when off court. Thomas Turner has convincingly shown that the commercialization of tennis from the 1860s onwards included a growing demand for tennis whites and shoes and coincided with the mechanization of the British footwear industry.[26] Thereafter, endorsed products, like the Renshaw (after champion Wimbledon brothers William and Ernest), had leather design features not strictly required for sporting performance and male elegance became synonymous with the middle class sporting look, as well as the aristocratic vogue for tweeds worn in urban settings. The practicalities of the tennis shoes traveled, if anything, better than the game itself, and for those who could accessorize their leisure with specialist clothing and footwear, what began as a novelty to play a game, became a statement of identity. As Turner has shown in *The Sports Shoe: A History from Field to Fashion*, AG Spalding's 1907 basketball shoes were high-cut refinements of the earlier tennis shoe design, and later, the indoor "training shoe" which was meant to enhance fitness rather than to practice a sport would lead to a revolution in dressing for leisure.

Twin influences in the spread of sports clothing were nationalistic and democratic trends. Uniforms became more widespread in Victorian Britain and in transnational society. Thus, militarized aspects permeated into civilian life. As the first mass-produced items, worn by the police, railway employees, nurses and the military, uniforms required the conformity of the individual to wider group values. Working overalls in factories or the custom for servants to wear black emphasized the collective nature of working life and this passed into sport and leisure. In the introduction to Kit I have argued that, from the 1870s onwards, easily distributed and widely sold manufactured clothing also account for the increase in cheaply produced garments. Although many people continue to make at least some of their own clothes, either through financial necessity or personal choice, the most significant continuity, shared by sport and cheaper ready-to-wear garments, was the expansion of the mass market and all that this implied.

As warm weather dressing, and the idea of "holiday" clothing became more widespread with trips to the seaside, the tennis show spawned a multiplicity of uses. Redfern and Sons of Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, a holiday destination beloved by Queen Victoria, became one of the most influential sports designers and retailers, due to the patronage of Alexandra, as Princess of Wales from 1863 to 1901, and later as Queen, and Queen Mother. As well as mourning dresses and silk ball gowns, Redfern targeted women's sportswear with tailored garments especially for field sports and riding, tennis, yachting and archery. Consistently choosing British designers over French couture houses was one aspect of the wider style popularized by Alexandra. The skirt and jacket combination, known as the "Redfern Suit," gave an alternative to the dress and bustle, being worn by "modern" active women including aristocrats.

In tones of purple, heather or tweed-mix on land or in navy blue and white grosgrain on sea, Redfern designs were constructed of wool, flannel or velvet and lined with silk. These were outdoorsy clothes that translated well to urban contexts. Given Alexandra's popularity, Redfern could legitimately claim to be the most successful Victorian and Edwardian sportswear brand for women worldwide, as part of a wider Anglo-style of female wardrobe. By the 1890s, as Redfern Limited, the designer and his sons supplemented a flagship salon in London with shops in New York, Rhode Island, Edinburgh, and Paris.

Turner has argued in The Sports Shoe that leisure was evident of a casual style, especially for young men, basketball would be to American footwear what tennis was to affluent Europe. They also became part of an Anglocentric "sporty-look." As a center of a huge empire, and with the diffusion of modern codified sport as a by-product of the soft diplomacy of those interactions, at individual level and in terms of international relations, sport and Britain's role cannot be neglected.[27] The opportunity to consider sport challenges common ideas of what constitutes center in the fashion industries, commonly said to be France and the United States of America. Well before Chanel sent models down the runway in her trademark jersey, the sporty stereotype and silhouette was formed as young, active and slim, for both men and women, as the great all-rounder and three-time Wimbledon winner Lottie Dod, indicated. She wore her five Wimbledon victories in 1887, 1888, 1891, 1892, and 1893 in her teens and early twenties, wearing a skirt that came to just below her ankles and a fetching cricket cap.

Of course, in this respect sportswear was not different from other clothing, but there were technical aspects that were to find a way into the mass market. I have argued in Given the Boot that The British Library has many patents related to sport in its collections and penny-entrepreneurs often initiated changes to clothing in search of a modest profit. By the 1880s patented "Sea-side wear" was available for the whole family. Leicester-based firm Corah's advertised their women's "combinations" of underwear, and beachwear side by side in the catalogue. So, the idea of undressing for sport and leisure allowed undergarments to become outerwear, with the necessary personal grooming technologies that this required. Corah's trademarked St Margaret's label knitwear and jersey in 1883 making explicit the link between under- and outer-wear. Corah's also soon diversified into yachting, rugby and football jerseys, while their golf and cycling hose also promoted trademark Nelson unshrinkable technology as a mark of its premium quality. Corah's were also internationalist in outlook: they also produced Jantzen swimwear under licence from a manufacturer in the United States and exported goods using native-speaking agents in mainland Europe. Several early Olympians can be seen wearing their registered red "diving girl" branded sportswear.[28]

By the time that Fred Perry, a tennis international star, wore a white shirt and trousers to play the first half of his matches, and then changed into a second, whiter outfit for the second half of his games, sport had become synonymous with an "English" or "British" look. Many of the Los Angeles celebrities with whom Perry partied after his three Wimbledon victories in 1934, 1935, and 1936, and his three US Open victories in 1933, 1934, and 1936, adopted his all-white uniform, including Clark Gable. It was reputed he had a relationship with Marlene Dietrich, and he opened the club house at the Beverly Hills Tennis club, playing in a doubles match with Charlie Chaplin, against Groucho Marx and Elsworth Vines in 1937, as England versus the United States. His career as a BBC and ITV broadcaster was undoubtedly helped by his celebrity status.

But many people today wear Fred Perry clothing who have never played tennis. After World War II, Perry was approached by Tibby Wegner, an Austrian footballer who had invented an anti-perspirant device worn around the wrist. Perry made a few changes to create the sweatband. This became a piece of de rigueur fashion wear as part of Jane Fonda's aerobics craze of the 1980s, often in dayglo colors, quite a way away from its original sporting roots. In 1952, Perry became intrigued that his old friend René Lacoste had created his own tennis shirts, with the crocodile logo, which was the Frenchman's nickname, due to his winning smile and lethal tennis. Originally under a logo of a pipe, which he liked to smoke, Perry copied the Lacoste design of a tennis shirt made from white knitted cotton pique with short sleeves and a buttoned placket, with a Leicester-based manufacturer, before deciding that smoking was not the most healthy of references for sportswear. So, the winner's laurel became Fred Perry's trademark and was an immediate success at Wimbledon in 1952 in white and black. Since then, the shirts have been co-opted by far right and far left groups, and have been worn by Andy Murray since 2009, so it has a multiplicity of meanings in popular culture.

More recently, there is also an aesthetic that has traveled the globe that began as a 1970s British innovation. Replica football shirts are now worn world-wide, recycled, collected and put in museums, worn on the streets for a kickabout, and the subject of particular charitable efforts, such as KitAid, which distributes the shirts in some of the poorest countries of the world.[29] From the mid-1970s, the football shirt assumed two main commercial functions, each with multiple stakeholders. Firstly, pioneered by non-league Kettering Town in 1976, the shirt became a primary surface for on-field sponsorship, given the added value of television audiences to advertisers. Secondly, the shirt moved beyond its sporting context to become an increasingly profitable line of replica merchandise sold in the club shop. As Stride et al. have shown, manufacturers such as Umbro and Adidas began by producing replica sportswear for children, but within two decades, had transformed the football shirt into an adult leisurewear garment.

As Stride et al. have shown, traditionally, sports manufacturers had sought a competitive edge via product differentiation, marketing strategy and price.[30] The particular demands of consumers of replica shirts altered the sports marketplace and product design from the 1970s in two key ways. Football clubs oversaw design, manufacture and retail so that even a popular "line" of shirt had a degree of inbuilt obsolescence. Because clubs relied on fans wanting the latest replica kit, small variations in design became important factors in increasing revenue. The scale of change increased enormously as a result of this, especially after the establishment of the Premier League in 1992. However, clubs were also sensitive to the claims that they were exploiting their loyal consumers. This obliged them to draw on notions of history and heritage as a way of legitimizing these commercial strategies. However, what began as an obligation actually opened up new revenue streams. The "nostalgia" or "retro" shirt helped to define new markets for both existing and innovative sports goods.

In a wider historical context, the fact that most people in Western countries and many others around the world are, in some way, wearing sportswear can appear counter-intuitive, given the corresponding rates of obesity, diabetes and illness caused by sedentary lifestyles. However, there are three ways in which this case can be made. First, the influence of a sporting lexicon has been adapted into the mainstream of what people wear for the most formal and significant occasions in their lives, as well as for everyday work, leisure, and pleasure. A second major influence has been the idea of leisure as being in itself aspirational and the use of items of dress and other objects which denote access to a lifestyle that entails time for relaxation. Going to the match in a replica shirt therefore signals several identities at the same time. The question of how accurate a replica has to be is determined by the utility that a consumer places upon different elements of authenticity.

We must also factor in that Elizabeth II became the most powerful, youngest and quite beautiful monarch in the world when she came to the throne in 1952, as a25-year-old mother of one. Her parents had themselves never expected to reign as monarchs but became George VI and Queen Elizabeth, when Edwards VIII abdicated to marry Wallis Simpson in 1936. But from 1936, a young Elizabeth, and her sister Margaret Rose, were bought up to be "sporty" with ponies from a very young age, swimming lessons covered on Pathé newsreels and a range of outdoor passtimes. When Elizabeth became monarch she rode to Trooping the Colour, and for several state occasions, as much as she made her love of horse racing, and blood sports well known. Given this aristocratic branding of a female monarch through sporting accomplishment, she also has used mega events like the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London 2012, to show her as active to the extent of appearing to parachute from a helicopter to open the proceedings. Tweeds, Hermès headscarves, sensible shoes, and so on, often worn with a simple string of pearls marks her personal style, as well as her more vibrant ceremonial attire. She epitomizes Sports Luxe, and wealth alone cannot compete with a Royal title.

Quite separately, the pages of *Vogue*, *Tatler*, *The Face* and other fashion magazines have been awash with the Sports Luxe trend which has also dominated the runways of most fashion houses for a decade. Traditional tailoring, epitomized in the 1980s work suit with big shoulders, is perceived as structured and safe, whereas designs based on sports clothing offer alternatives in the form of relaxed silhouettes, comfort and high-tech performance characteristics. Many brands which have had a significant history of providing sporting goods are involved in the luxury end of the fashion market to this day. Pringle of Scotland, formed by Robert Pringle in 1815 as a hosiery and underwear manufacturer, moved into cashmere in the 1870s and became the celebrity golf-wear of choice from then on. Now, golf jumpers, cricket jumpers and "hoodies" are the staple of many Fall/Winter collections, to be worn far away from their original contexts. When Burberry relaunched itself as a luxury brand in 1999, Kate Moss became the face of the new campaign, wearing a bikini. A far cry from the outerwear solutions the firm pioneered as tailors in Victorian Britain.

Conclusion

This chapter has resisted seeing the diffusion of British sportswear, and dress history as one that primarily went from center to periphery of the British empire and Anglophile world. For instance, the fashion for Japonisme—all things Japanese in art, culture, and style—in France and Britain at the end of the nineteenth century, meant that jujitsu, judo, and mixed martial arts were highly sought after by the social elite, and by militant feminists. I have argued in *A History of British Judo* that, in 1881, Prince Albert Victor and Prince George both had a large red and blue dragon tattooed onto their arms while on a trip to Japan with HMS Bacchante, and, though Albert Victor died young, both he and the future George V therefore typified the fashion for all things Japonisme.[31] For instance, in 1892, Takashima Shidachi lectured the Japan Society in London on the history and development of judo.

By 1926, the Budokwai, which had formed in 1918 as a way to promote Japanese culture in London, had become a sophisticated club, charging three guineas a year to become a member, at a time when the average male wage the average annual salary was around £70 for men and £30 for women (the equivalent of £6,500 and £2,800 today) for working a 55-hour week. So few women, and only slightly more men, earned more than a guinea a week.

The Budokwai system of grades at the time consisted only of black belts. But in 1926, the first colored belts were used to grade towards black belt proficiency, with beginners wearing white belts at fifth *kyū*; fourth a yellow belt; third a green one; second a blue belt, and to first *kyū*, brown before moving on to a first "*dan*" grade, or black belt. Suggestions that the shade of the belt was based on the hues of snooker balls, appear to have been a colorful myth. A second reference to colored belts in 1927 confirms that this encouraged progress to proficiency. This now differs around the world and depending on junior or senior proficiency, but the colored belting system is now synonymous in the popular imagination with judo, which is further magnified by its Olympic status since 1972, with a demonstration event in 1932, and a full medal event at the Tokyo Games of 1964. A small clothing innovation, that has had global repercussions. The British, notably Charles Palmer, chair of the British Judo Association, and president of the British Olympic Association and the International Judo Federation were vital to the "sportification" of the rules and competition regulations of what had been a traditional Japanese form of education and moral training. So Anglophile articulations could have very different national heritage, as beginnings. Dress history is one way of examining these nuances.

Sport has been slow to infiltrate the academic canon of historical fashion and dress, and this includes issues of labor. Both are highly gendered activities, and within different subcultures, there are further gendered labor markets. First, then, fashion and sporting goods. The labor of fashion and dress was considered to be essentially a female activity. Furthermore, the tension between fashion commodities, which have often been cast in Western culture as frivolous, and a production characterized by the poorest class of workers contributed to keeping fashion on the margins of scholarship. There has not been space here to explore the gendered labor markets of sports clothing but there is tremendous scope to do so in further articles.

This work is long overdue. Sport remains one of the world economy's most important symbolic cultural industries, with a global value reflected in the soft and hard diplomacy of bidding for Giga events, such as Olympic and Paralympic Games, and for what are now called smaller mega events, such as the football World Cup. Only dwarfed by world expos, these large ambulatory sporting tournaments are held across the globe, enabling the qualifying nations to see themselves on a world stage, while the host is able to inflect each edition with cultural values, styling and performance which reflects its own identity. The Qatar World Cup of 2022 exemplifies why nations that consider themselves to be world leading would want to host gigantic sports tournaments, even while they are clearly not meeting the need for environmental sustainability. Despite this undisputed economic confluence, the place of sport in the fashion and dress industries have only recently begun to be seriously analyzed in historical research, and leisure has almost entirely been neglected. Both remain marginalized from the core of history as an academic discipline.

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21 Mourning Dress in the West, 1800 until Today

Codification, Gender, and Global Perspectives

Maude Bass-Krueger

At the June 2020 funeral of George Floyd, a Black man whose murder by a white police officer in Minneapolis in May 2020 sparked a reckoning for racial justice in the United States and beyond, mourners inside and outside the funeral service at the Fountain of Praise church in Houston, Texas predominantly wore black, as has been typical in Western morning practices since the 1800s. Inside the church, where the final funeral services capped a three-state, five-day service, invited friends and dignitaries wore formal pants black suits, dresses, and skirts. Some inside the church donned black t-shirts bearing Floyd's infamous last words, "I can't breathe," along with black pants. Outside, the crowd was unified not in the formality of dress, but in the predominance of black clothing as well.[1] The codification of mourning practices has loosened dramatically in the West since the 1800s, and the rigidity of nineteenth-century mourning practice, with set fabrics and colors corresponding to the progressive stages of mourning, has ceded to the accepted informality of wearing typically dark daily wear on the day of the funeral only. But wearing black remains a predominant outward signifier of individual and social mourning. Yet, amid the crowd of black-clad mourners, George Floyd's family stood out: dressed in white—white dresses, hats, and shoes for the women, crisp white suits for the men—their garments were chosen to signal the celebration of George Floyd's life.[2] Their dress also served to highlight the rich histories of global mourning practices, the historic and cultural diversity of mourning colors and silhouettes, as well as the centrality of dress within the ritualized ceremony of bereavement.

It is impossible to provide an overview of the mourning practices for all cultures since 1800; indeed, even generalizing by large geographic areas or cultural regions would be beyond the scope of this chapter. Yet it is possible to recognize several tendencies that run through the practice of mourning dress in the West since 1800, three of which will be examined here. First, the increasingly rigid codification of mourning dress from 1800 until the turn of the century, followed by a simplification and then disappearance of regimented mourning dress in the twentieth century. Second, the complex negotiation of gender and sexuality that was made visible in the black mourning clothes worn by women, who, in many cultures, wore the most visually distinctive mourning garments. Third, a shift in mourning practices in non-Western cultures following exposure to Western mourning practices due to imperialism, colonization, or globalization.

This chapter builds on Lou Taylor's seminal work on mourning, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, first published in 1983.[3] A close reader of social history, Taylor chronicled the development of European and American mourning dress and etiquette from the Middle Ages to the 1980s, with the strongest focus on the period between 1600–1910. Taylor mainly concentrated on female dress, but also incorporated

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discussions of men and children's clothing, the mourning industry, mourning jewelry, and a discussion of color in mourning. The arc of Taylor's thesis is that etiquette rules for mourning dress became a coded, public sign of respectability for the upper and middle classes in Europe and North American through the nineteenth century. Aided by the commercial exploitation of mourning wear by manufacturers and advertisers, the commodification of mourning—and the social pressures and social stratification that came with increasingly complex mourning codes—reached a peak between 1880 and 1900.[4] A simplification of mourning practices was already in place at the turn of the century, only to be cemented during and following World War I. After World War II, mourning dress was no longer a specific branch of the ready-to-wear industry.[5] By the dawn of the twenty-first century, mourning dress was indistinguishable from daily wear.

Taylor's conclusions remain unchallenged by those who write on European and American mourning dress today, but historians have worked on deepening various aspects of her work. Some recent writing has addressed the changing culture of mourning fashion during war, particularly the First World War.[6] As the core of Taylor's researched focused on the United Kingdom, and France to a lesser extent, authors have also examined other national contexts, including Australia and the Netherlands, for instance.[7] Books and exhibitions on the color black have also addressed mourning through the lens of the most prevalent color in Western mourning practices.[8] The Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art organized an exhibition on mourning dress in 2014, and exhibitions on the color black, including one at MoMu in Antwerp in 2010 and another at the Missouri History Museum in 2016, also prominently featured mourning ensembles.[9] Yet, perhaps because of the solidity and depth of Taylor's knowledge on mourning dress, there has been no real attempt to write the narratives of Western sartorial mourning practices anew, nor has there been any sustained attempt to address the narratives through a globalized lens. The latter is perhaps due to the great diversity in mourning practices across non-Western cultures and religions.

The research for this chapter draws not only from social history, but also from fashion studies, color studies, gender studies, Black studies, the history of emotions, death studies, war studies, and from material culture studies. Fashion scholars such Anne Buck and Anne Hollander have written historical overviews of mourning dress in the West that complement Taylor's work.[10] Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood's article on birth, marriage, and death in *The Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion* helped provide reference points for non-Western mourning dress, as did articles by Saet Byul Park, Marily DeLong, and Brenda Fermenías on the increasing prevalence of black mourning dress in contemporary Korea and Peru.[11] Michel Pastoureau's influential work on colors in visual culture, including his tome on the color black, proved fruitful for understanding the rich histories of black dyes and textiles and their connections to death and grief.[12]

Much of the excellent work on the material culture of mourning in the long nineteenth century addresses gendered aspects of ritualized grief such as Willemijn Ruberg's study of Dutch women,[13] Holly Kent's article on the politics of dress for Union women in the United states,[14] and Joy Damousi's work on motherhood and grief in Australia.[15] Historians working in war studies, and specifically those who work on World War I, have sought to investigate the reasons behind the dramatic simplification of mourning dress codes that preceded, but were then accelerated by the war.[16] My own work on mourning dress in France during the First World War has shown that mourning attire was fraught with anxiety from both genders who worried both about the rapid simplification of mourning wear (which some equated to forgetting the dead) and about the visibility of black-clad widows (who were sexually ambiguous, neither virgins nor married).[17]

Scholars of Black American culture have written on one of the most visible aspects of contemporary mourning attire in the United States, notably R.I.P. shirts, which memorialize the dead through images and text printed on cotton t-shirts worn by family and friends in daily life. Here, the articles by Robin Brooks, Jenn Shreve, Kami Fletcher, and Candi Conn helped contextualize the history, politics, and contemporary manifestations of the memorial shirt.[18]

Although the history of emotions has yet to have its material turn, key overviews of the field provided relevant information about how manifestations of private and public grief have changed over time, particularly for young girls and women.[19] The cultural histories of death and mourning, which can perhaps be called Death Studies, was a particularly rich field for research on fashion, textiles, and materiality.[20] As Ruth Toulson and Zahra Newby write in the introduction to their edited volume on *The Materiality of Mourning*, the study of death has long neglected grief, and with it grief's rituals—which often revolve around objects.[21] Those who do discuss grief, they write, too often focus on literary of philosophical approaches rather than on the lived experience.[22] However, a rising awareness of the need to study emotional experience, and the effect that material culture has shown to have on the emotional experience of grief, has helped propel new research on the intersection between the bereft and the object. Both Toulson and Newby, as well as Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, in their work *Death, Memory, and Material Culture*,[23] differentiate between *dedicated* objects, which are those created for use in funeral contexts, such as mourning armbands or mourning dress that was specifically made for that purpose, and *emergent* memory objects, which are those which "may have had a long life in other context but take on new resonances after death as potent reminders of the deceased, such as clothing."[24]

Examples of mourning attire were examined in the online catalogues of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Victoria and Albert, and in the online database of the Berg Fashion Central. The nineteenth century and contemporary press in France, Europe, and North America—*La Mode Illustrée, Femina, La Femme de France, Vogue, The New York Times, Time Magazine, Vanity Fair,* and *The Guardian*, to name a few—was also searched for references and images about mourning and widows.

The Rise of Codified Mourning Dress in the West, 1800 to 1900

As mourning ceremonial and dress, originally a privilege of the royal courts of Europe in the Middle Ages, gradually spread outward to the rest of society, finally reaching the poorest levels of society by the early twentieth century, wealthy families doubled down on mourning etiquette to reinforce their own social standing.[25] By the 1850s, mourning etiquette in Western Europe followed a code—set by the upper classes—so rigid that women feared social ostracism if they did not adhere to an increasingly complex set of sartorial and social rules.[26] Such strictly codified mourning dress had several functions: as a non-verbal means of communication, it visually denoted class, gender identity, wealth, and social standing. Mourning dress also help mediate between inner emotions and the outside world. But it also put the burden of mourning and of maintaining a family's social respectability on the shoulders of the woman. As a Dutch fashion magazine, *De Gracieuse*, noted in 1895: "When, after a decease, the first feeling of grief has passed, every adornment will hurt a wounded heart and the mourner will resort to black robes, which equal a silent request to spare her of the trivialities of life, and that builds a dividing wall around her, that is respected by every sensitive human being."[27]

While mourning dress helped the widow communicate her emotional state to the outside world, critics were also quick to associate non-adherence to mourning norms as indicative of an improper emotional state or a weak marriage. To avoid such criticism, European and North American fashion magazines, which saw a specular rise in readership in this period, helped advise all classes on the minutia of mourning etiquette. "Mourning being also subject to the caprices of fashion," the American fashion magazine *Godey's* reported in 1862, "we will now give a few hints as to the styles now in vogue."[28] These magazines not only set the standards which dominated the lives of respectable women but also informed women of the stores, shops, and purveyors of mourning dress. Yet, as Holly Kent notes in her discussion of mourning within the US fashion press during the Civil War, meticulous discussion of the specificities of mourning dress etiquette may have offered readers a sense of order amidst the turmoil of funeral preparations, but the magazines focused on mourning as a means of demonstrating feminine respectability rather than as an emotional part of the grieving process.[29]

Conversely, although women were expected to wear their grief on their garments, as it were, showing sadness through outward emotions was not always acceptable in polite, pre-war society. Writing about the nineteenth-century Netherlands, for instance, Willemijn Ruberg quotes etiquette books that recommend that women do not attend funerals, lest they lose control of their emotions and exhibit loud outbursts of grief. Ruberg theorizes that outward grief might "compromise the function of mourning dress, which was carefully tailored to indicate grief and to function as a wall between inner emotion and the public's gaze."[30] Peter Stearns has written about the differences in emotional socialization of children during this period, where girls (but not boys) were encouraged to learn the appropriate responses to grief by playing with dolls whose kits, by the 1870s and 1880s, sometimes included grief paraphernalia like black armbands.[31] While grief was acceptable for both genders to display in the nineteenth century—a contrast to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prohibitions against externalizing the feeling—intense sadness gradually fell out of vogue in the second half of the nineteenth century and happiness became a central concern.[32] The arc of the history of emotion—from valuing sadness to happiness in capitalist, liberal economics—corresponds with increasingly rigid codification and then the gradual loosening of sartorial mourning codes; research into the intersection of the history of emotions, particularly that of grief, and its material culture would be a fruitful avenue of inquiry.[33]

Throughout the nineteenth century, mourning dress was worn by all who could afford it; those who could not wore their best Sunday clothes. A painting by Cork artist Daniel MacDonald is a rare representation of the realities of a poor Irish family mourning during the Great Famine, a period of mass starvation and disease between 1845 and 1849, during which an estimated 1 million people died and another million fled the country. The mourners wear no recognizable sign of mourning, but a red worsted cape—likely the most expensive garment in the bereaved widow's wardrobe—draws attention to itself and to her. By the mid-nineteenth century, women from the working class could often afford mourning clothes, deciding between using the services of a cheap dressmaker, buying their mourning outfits from new specialized stores, department stores, or warehouses; buying second-hand mourning clothes; borrowing or loaning clothes from societies set up to inculcate the rituals of respectability to the poor; or

Figure 21.1 Francis Montague Holl, I am the Resurrection and the Life, 1872 © Leeds Art Gallery.

simply dyeing one's garments black.[34] An 1872 painting by Francis Montague Holl of a simple village funeral shows a trio of mourning women wearing black silk crepe cloaks and skirts, as dictated by social conventions; the young girl also wears a black mourning coat (Figure 21.1). The poorest were still excluded from formal mourning etiquette, but their lack of outward signs of bereavement did not diminish their profound belief in the appropriateness of a decent Christian church burial.[35]

At the other end of the social ladder, women applied frenetic energy to ensure that their mourning wardrobes were fashionable and appropriate—no small feat when the mourning process consisted of three distinct stages of mourning, and each stage required the appropriate set of garments for all the activities of a day, including interior gowns, walking dresses, carriage garments, and evening clothes. A passage from the 1890 *Gentlewoman's Book of Dress*, which advises that "if [a woman] lifts her skirts from the mud, she must show by her frilled black silk petticoat and plain black stockings her grief has penetrated to her innermost sanctuaries," shows how deeply Western society judged inner emotional grief by the standards of the outward appearance of mourning dress.[36]

By the draw of the nineteenth century, mourning regulations for widows prescribed that full mourning, the first stage, typically lasted for one year if one was mourning a close relative; the second stage would last a further nine months; ordinary mourning then followed for three more months; finally, half mourning (*demi-deuil*) stretched on for another six months, for a total of two and a half years.[37] Some widows never came out of half mourning. Queen Victoria, widowed at the age of 42, was the most highly visible embodiment of this practice, although Patricia Jalland has argued that her behavior was more a sign of complicated, or chronic, grief, and was "neither widely admired nor highly respected. [38] In other words, as stringent as Victorian mourning regulations may have been, Queen Victoria's lifelong adherence to wearing mourning dress was not representative of typical Victorian practices. Mourning periods were generally lessened according to the distance one had from the deceased. There were regional variations in the length of mourning across Europe as well, with the French observing a less lengthy general mourning stage than the English, for instance. While absolute adherence to the guidelines guided the upper classes, individuals outside of the highest echelons adapted and interpreted the rules to suit their needs and circumstances.

The silhouette and subtle rules about fabric and accessories changed nearly every season in nineteenth-century Western Europe and North America, but the fundamental rules remained the same: only dull fabrics, metals, and stones were allowed in deep mourning (some suggested that no jewelry at all should be worn in full mourning); each subsequent mourning stage allowed for the introduction of more lustrous black fabric and trimmings, and even trimmings in white, gray, or mauve. Dull and then shiny accessories could be gradually reincorporated into the wardrobe. Children, young women, middle-aged women, and older women followed different sets of rules about which fabrics could be worn and during which periods. Mourning codes were also different for clothes worn inside the home (where the woman was also on display), to those worn outside. From the 1800s until the early- to mid-twentieth century, black crepe—a lusterless matte silk gauze that had been crimped with heated rollers, dyed black, and stiffened with starch, gum, or glue—was typically used to make mourning garments. As Anne Buck has noted, black crepe (also called crape when used for mourning), was consumed in such large quantities in Victorian England that manufacturers such as Courtauld amassed large fortunes, and their supply could not always meet demand.[39] The price of the fabric depended on the quality, with coarser, and less expensive varieties appearing in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Stores specialized in mourning clothes commodified their mourning products with an eye to widening their customer base, often boasting that their shelves featured products for every budget. Advertised in fashion periodicals, described with the same rhetoric as for fashionable dress, and mirroring exactly the fashionable silhouette, the design process and commercialization of mourning dress and mourning jewelry in the long nineteenth century operated firmly within the fashion system. Indeed, mourning dress was so indistinguishable from fashionable dress in its silhouette that, when faced with a black dress, cape, or mantle in a museum archive dating from the nineteenth century onward, it is often difficult for the researcher to ascertain that the garment was in fact used for mourning and not simply as fashionable wear. For nineteenth-century garments, matte black crepe and matte trim are often the distinguishing features of mourning dress, as seen for instance in this fashionable American mourning dress dated to 1907 cut from matte black English crepe, along with its accompanied veiled hat, black leather gloves, and black umbrella. But for garments dating from World War I and after, unless the owner specified that the garment was in fact worn for mourning, the garment is made from plain black crepe, or if the garment includes a veil or recognizable trimming, it becomes hard to differentiate a garment used specifically for mourning from the standard black garb of daily life.

Mourning Dress for Men and the Simplification of Female Mourning Attire, 1900–1920

While mourning attire for women became increasingly codified over the course of the nineteenth century, mourning dress for men lessened during the same period: mourning cloaks and trailing hat sweepers, typically of male mourning dress in the early 1800s were replaced by arm bands (and sometimes hat bands) worn over an ordinary black suit and black tie.[40] Originally used in military circles, armbands were adopted by male civilians during the nineteenth century;[41] the practice has continued today, notably at high-profile sports events. The length of mourning was also greatly reduced for men, with just six months of mourning before a widower could remarry, according to nineteenth-century Dutch etiquette.[42] In this British cabinet card from c. 1880, the female mourner is in full black mourning while her husband stands by her side in normal clothes, his status signaled by the mere presence of a black armband (Figure 21.2). Thus, from 1800 onward, the gender divides in mourning practices widened as male mourning dress reduced itself to the black armband, if that at all. Mourning dress from 1800 onward was worn almost exclusively by women.

The streamlining of mourning practice was already under way at the turn of the century, spurred by funeral reformers who opposed the ostentatiousness of Victorian mourning as well as by falling mortality rates and a gradual decline in Christian faith.[43] Anne Buck notes growing opposition to extravagant mourning beginning in the 1870s on economic grounds, citing evidence that the sale of black crepe (crape) in England began to decline in the 1890s among the upper classes.[44] She also notes a feminist element in the opposition, as women bore the weight of mourning: "In all cases the nearer the relative the more cumbrous becomes the dress of the female mourner; but the widow's dress positively amounts to a mild form of suttee [the Indian practice, banned in 1829, wherein the wife immolated herself on her husband's funeral pyre] … It is in fact a survival of the outward expression of the inferiority of women for … the inferior always expresses grief for the superior."[45]

The First World War, with an estimated 40 million military and civilian casualties, signaled the first major change in Western mourning practices in the long nineteenth century as mourning dress codes for women were drastically simplified to accommodate wartime needs. The mass mourning imposed by the war greatly accelerated the changes already under way. The same exceptions and adaptations that middle-class women had enjoyed to best accommodate the mourning process to their lifestyle extended to the upper classes during the war. The sheer number of deaths—and the deep mourning that the previous century's strict mourning rituals would have required for the millions of bereaved widows, family, and friends—made lavish and restrictive displays of bereavement seem ostentatious and inappropriate. Simplifying mourning codes may also have been a question of morale: the sight of millions of women of all ages shrouded in black crape would have been too bleak.

"Mourning codes have never been as strictly disregarded as during this time of anguish when even the most pained women cannot always manifest by external signs, by the way in which she dresses or by the life that she leads, the pain that constricts her and her detachment from all things," wrote a journalist in the middle-class magazine French *La Mode Illustrée* in 1916.[46] The magazine advised readers that buying costly mourning fabrics would be seen as brazen given the war, and that they need not impoverish themselves for fashion's sake: black armbands or basic black crepe was perfectly

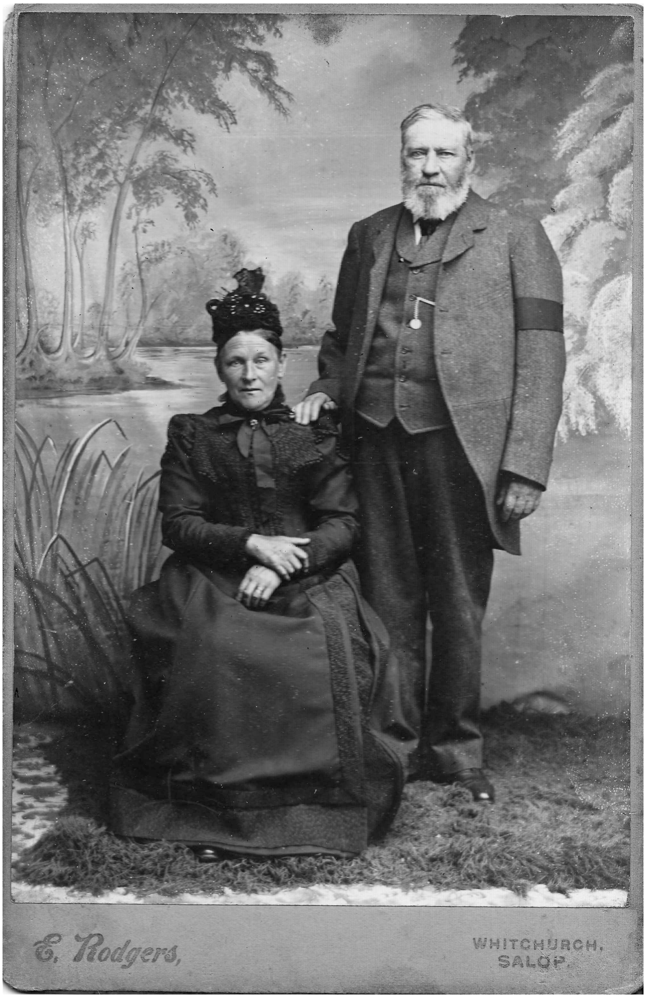

Figure 21.2 Cabinet card, c. 1880. British. Albumen. © Courtesy Ann Longmore-Etheridge Collection.

acceptable. Indeed, encouraging mourning women to return to work as a way to "make abstraction from their pain" and find "the only consolation that they might have in this world," the magazine clearly stated the central reason for the simplification of mourning dress during the war: women from all social classes were working—for pay or as charity—outside of the home for the benefit of the war, thereby precluding the wearing of bulky or vision-constraining garments or accessories and rendering moot the pre-war requirement of avoiding all social contact during the first mourning period. Mourning shawls, which prevented movement, were to be avoided, for example.[47]

For the wealthier readers of *Femina*, "proper mourning" required that women purchase mourning garb that was "correct but nevertheless in fashion."[48] While *Femina* assured its readers that touches of white could be worn even in the deepest mourning, *La Mode Ilustrée* declared that this was "incompatible with deep mourning"; on this issue, the journalist wrote, the magazine "sided with our readers against fashion."[49] Wartime fashion magazines featured articles about correct mourning dress and practices, fashion plates showing the latest styles of mourning wear, patterns for mourning garments, and advertisements for specialized mourning stores alongside their typical fashion features—a juxtaposition that today reads as jarring. An article from *La Femme de France* titled "Frivolities: *fantaisies* for mourning" (*fantaisies* covers jewelry and accessories) mentioned "naturally elegant" widows who were "seduced by a thousand pretty things," played into the hand of male critics who accused fashionable mourners of desacralizing the dead.[50]

The Decline of Specific Mourning Attire in the Postwar Period

In the postwar period, the rigid practice of fashionable mourning continued its decline, although mourning dress was still reported on by the fashion press. By 1920, a widow from the aristocracy was supposed to mourn her husband for one year and six weeks—a full year less than in the Victorian era.[51] A series of illustrations by Bernard Boutet de Monvel in the October 1920 issue of the *Gazette du Bon Ton*, the French fashion magazine for the elite, showed the progression of bereavement from full black crape to white silk (Figure 21.3). Nearing the end of her mourning period, the woman begins to reapply powder to her face, then lipstick, finally posing jauntily with a cigarette in hand to signal a return to gay society.

An analysis of the coverage on mourning dress in American *Vogue* shows 338 records for "mourning" for 1890–1899; 1107 records for 1900–1909; 797 records for 1910–1919; 359 records for 1920–1929; 307 records for 1930–1939; followed by a dramatic decline, with only 59 records for 1940–1949. The decades following 1950 show little fluctuation, with around 20–3 records a decade until the present. In perhaps the last proper article dedicated to correct mourning attire, dated to March 1, 1938, the *Vogue* journalist writes that "so many women, especially in New York, wear smart, simple, dull black dresses, and hats with veils, that the transformation of their wardrobes into mourning is often very slight. […] [T]he general effect, though subdued, is very much the same as usual."[52] During World War II, almost all the references to mourning fall in the "address book" or advertisement section of the magazine. The 1942 issue of *Vogue* features not a single article or fashion shoot featuring mourning dress, nor, it appears, do any subsequent issues since.

In practice, royalty and the elite have held on to traditional mourning dress the longest. After the assignation of President John F. Kennedy in 1963, Jaqueline Kennedy appeared in a black Givenchy suit, black gloves, and a long black veil, becoming, through her public appearance, an embodiment of the nation's grief.[53] At Prince Philip's funeral in 2021, the Queen and all Royal attendees wore deep black;[54] at his memorial service in March 2022, however, many of the attendees, the Queen included, wore dark green, which was the color of his official livery but also one of the accepted colors of half mourning, according to royal watchers. Other members of the royal family adhered to traditional protocol for half mourning as well, incorporating hints of white, purple, and blue into their ensembles.[55]

Contemporary Mourning Practices in Black American Communities: The R.I.P. Shirt

As stringent—and expensive—as the mourning dress practices were in the long nineteenth century, they had the benefit of externalizing and ritualizing grief. The loss of visible symbols of bereavement in contemporary Western societies has meant that the mourner's grief is private, rendered invisible from society at large. In the aftermath of World War I, as black garments lost their connotation to mourning, some women also

(a)

(b)

Figure 21.3 Bernard Boutet de Monvel. Deuil. *La Gazette du Bon Ton*, issue number 8, October 1920. Public domain: https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/gazettedubonton00c (p. 242).

adopted armbands (black or violet) or wore commemorative jewelry in order to show external signs of grief. Recently, a new public mourning trend has emerged in Black American culture that fulfills the same outward function as mourning clothing in the long nineteenth century: the R.I.P. (Rest in Peace) or memorial t-shirt, popularized in the 1990s and early 2000s and still worn today (Figure 21.4).

Figure 21.4 Lageisha, from the series "Studio X," 2007. © Hank Willis Thomas. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Printed with the deceased person's face, name (often nickname), birth and death year, and mourning phrase (often a variation of "In Loving Memory"), memorial t-shirts function as perhaps the most visible tradition of public mourning wear in the contemporary United States.

The origin of the memorial shirt is unclear. Some scholars speculate that it may have originated in New Orleans funeral practices, or else further back, to West African and Caribbean traditions of wearing head scarves or handkerchiefs with the deceased person's likeness on them.[56] Various historians and journalists claim that the practice of wearing R.I.P. shirts grew popular in the 1990s on the West Coast as a way to remember slain gang members, but others link the shirts to Black East Coast or Southern culture.[57] The hashtag #memorialshirt or #memorialshirts on Instagram, as well as an internet search with the same keywords, reveals a commercial enterprise that spans from large print-on-demand companies who do business selling printed shirts more generally to local, typically Black-owned, businesses who specialize in memorial shirts, often with their own unique visual style. Shirts increase in price depending on the quality and quantity of the printed matter on the shirt, and the nature of the shirt itself (sweatshirts can also be used as a base).

The shirts are a tangible way for family members and friends to express their bereavement or condolences during the funeral and continue to wear the shirt after—an act of remembering in daily life akin to nineteenth-century mourning practices. Kami Fletcher, writing from her own experience of wearing an R.I.P. shirt for a family member's funeral, writes about the garment as "an intense act of memory-making underlaid with African American social and cultural values that can produce agency and activism helping Black people mark their dead in ways that ensure they are not forgotten marginalized, or perhaps most of all, misrepresented."[58] Walking memorials of sorts, R.I.P. shirts allow death to come into the everyday discourse of Black communities while also confronting larger society about its role in African American death.[59] In the wake of September 11, R.I.P. or memorial shirts were also adopted by white communities in order to mourn the death of loved ones. Today, searching for memorial shirts on the internet shows representative images of t-shirts bearing both Black and white faces. However, the tradition and practice of wearing such shirts is not only more prevalent within Black communities, but also carries a more potent political message.

Taken up by the Movement for Black Lives, the memorial t-shirt has transformed into what Robin Brooks calls a "protest" shirt: whereas R.I.P. t-shirts are worn by family and friends of the departed, protest memorial t-shirts, which typically feature the names of Black men and women who have been murdered by the police and whose stories have received national attention (pictures, birth and death dates, and catch-phrases are not featured on these shirts) are worn by those who seek justice for their deaths. "Not only do these shirts pay homage to lost lives," Brooks writes, "they also powerfully demand a transformation to systems of oppression for those alive in the US."[60]

The Gender Politics of the Color Black: "Merry" Widows and Sexualized Mourning

Running through the narrative of how distinct and ritualized mourning dress slowly disappeared over the course of the twentieth century is the intertwined history of the color black, with its complicated sexual undertones. As Michel Pastoureau writes in his monograph on the color, the very first verses of Genesis draw an opposition between darkness, where no life was possible, and God's commandment for light, thus revealing a more than two-thousand-year-old history of associating black with death.[61] Pastoureau notes that from the beginning of the Roman Republic, black was present in various forms—objects, offerings, paintings—in Roman funeral rights. Magistrates, and the elite who copied them, began to wear black (or dark grey) beginning in the second century B.C., marking the beginning of a custom of mourning clothing in Europe.[62] Dense, dramatic, and sober, the values imbued within the color black make it a natural fit for the somber nature of mourning.

However, other colors were also associated with mourning, including white—the color of glory, purity, and resurrection—which was one of the most widespread mourning colors in Europe before 1800. Indeed, traditions of wearing white remained entrenched among peasants and farmers communities across Europe through the nineteenth century as well, as well as among royalty through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[63] The pristine white garments worn by the family members at George Floyd's funeral derive directly from this practice as well. One of the most ancient colors for mourning, white was—and still is—also used extensively outside of Europe, notably in many Eastern cultures, such as China, Korean, and Japan as well as in parts of Africa and in Hindu ceremonies. Anne Hollander has noted that the only generalization possible about the type of garments associated with mourning practices in Early Modern and Modern Europe is that mourning clothes were in some way different from ordinary dress and usually suggested humility. Cloaks, hoods, or veils were more frequently used to identify a person in mourning during this period than any ritualized color.[64]

By the fourteenth century, however, black had become recognized as symbolic of grief, although reds, browns, and greys could be used as well into the sixteenth century.[65] And from the eighteenth century onward, black was generally accepted among all social classes as the preeminent, and most appropriate, color for mourning in the West. However, black was not reserved *exclusively* for mourning, neither before the 1800s or following. Black was historically a highly labor intensive and difficult color to produce, meaning that it favored by the elite who used it to display their financial prowess in procuring (and maintaining) garments of the deepest black.[66] By the 1800s, the dye had become cheaper, rendering black textiles more democratically priced. Black subsequently became widely used among the working class: black garments hid dirt well and were considered a sign of middle-class respectability. In the nineteenth century, shopkeepers, *modistes*, and seamstresses were nearly always visually represented wearing black tailored suits. Pierre-Auguste Renoir's painting *The Umbrellas* (1880–1886) shows such a black-clad hatmaker (the large hatbox on her wrist reveals her profession) wearing a tailored bodice trimmed with black velvet cuffs, a black shift with a high-ruffed neck, and a full black skirt. However, black was also dramatic and attractive—a feature that many fashion critics remarked on and that elegant ladies did not fail to notice. When fashionable women wore black outside of mourning, as in the famous portrait of Virginie Gautreau, "Madame X," painted in 1884 by John Singer Sargent, it was to signal a desire to play by a different set of rules in a fashionable world ruled by the bright colors of aniline dye and the multi-hued Orientalism of Paul Poiret. Indeed, a missive from one of the American Union's leading fashion periodical, *Peterson's Magazines*, advised readers during the civil war to stop wearing "black or dark-colored silks," as fashionable dress, the subtext being that they should now be reserved for mourning.[67]

A ubiquity of black dresses during the First World War accustomed millions of women to wearing some form of black garment—most likely cut in the latest fashion.

Public rhetoric sent mixed signals to female mourners: fashion magazines promoted the most *au courant* mourning through countless fashion illustrations and texts meant to guide readers through sartorial mourning rituals, but society was also quick to castigate women for being too conspicuous or fashionable in their mourning. Fashionable mourners ran the risk of being perceived as less grief-stricken than their peers, particularly if the widows were young and attractive. A journalist for *L'Écho de Paris* rebuked women for wearing tight black dresses, black silk stockings, and patent-leather shoes: "No, these are not our widows," the journalist lamented.[68] Fashion-conscious women were called "fake widows, "bad widows," "merry widows," or even worse, prostitutes.

Because women wore the most visible outward symbols of mourning, they were also the lightning rods for the most virulent public criticism. Paradoxically, mourning dress simultaneously informed the public of one's widowhood—and thus also of one's new "availability." Nations where young men were dying at unprecedented rates sought to increase marriage, and by extension, birthrates. As many more young women than in previous generations became young widows, society adapted to support quicker remarriage. *Femina's* June 1917 article "Can A War Widow Remarry?" was written to assure women that remarriage was acceptable but also confirmed wider societal unease around the practice.[69] Legally, article 228 of the French Civil Code mandated a period of widowhood of ten months, after which a woman was officially free to remarry, the journalist informed *Femina*'s readers. Yet the laws of morality were not always those of the law, the article maintained; the fictional young widow who was the subject of the article was "advised" to remarry not for love, but to ensure a better life for her children. A second marriage, *Femina* counseled, could reinforce, and honor, the memory of the deceased while also paving the way for a future with a "fundamentally good" man. "I encourage you to do it," the columnist argued, "Remarry! It's life, as they say … and life will always be right against death."[70]

In truth, young widows were the frequent target of misogynistic commentary. The trope of the fragile, economically vulnerable, and sexually experienced female mourner was prevalent in public discourse. "These women are young and wear austere black mourning crepe from heat to foot … and for a louis [coin]—wartime pricing—they let their veils drop: black is not always dressed," a journalist wrote at the start of the war in the popular French weekly *Le Cri de Paris*.[71] The fact that black-clad *modistes*, *midinettes*, and *couturières*—typically young, unmarried women of the working class—were also perceived of as facile mistresses (is the man behind Renoir's *modiste* lustful?), also added to the implicit sexuality of black garments.

In the postwar period, as the black dress evolved into a fashionable statement, the seductive undertones of the widow's dress became its main selling point for designers such as Gabrielle Chanel and others. But as black dresses became more fashionable, they also lost their sexual undertone, becoming, simply, "a standard garment for every elegant woman's wardrobe," as *Vogue* wrote about the seeming ubiquity of the black Chanel dress in fashionable society that season.[72] By the 1930s, even traditional mourning suppliers, such as the British firm Courtaulds began to market their mourning garments as suitable for elegant evening wear as well.[73] From this period on, as the black dress became the "little black dress"—that is, a garment suitable for daily wear, evening wear, and, only when required, mourning—the burden on women to act as the social bodies of mourning decreased. Today, aside from the moment of the funeral, when both men and women can choose to don sober garments, it is, in most cases, and outside the practice of wearing memorial shirts, impossible to tell from outward appearance alone if someone is grieving in Western society.

Imperialism, Colonialism, and Globalization: Mourning Dress Outside of Western Europe and North America

While wearing black for mourning is the most prevalent feature of Western mourning practices, it is also common in other cultures and traditions. Black or dark blue is also the color of mourning throughout Southwest Asia, a practice that has become encoded in the language, according to Francis Steingass: "throwing garments into the Nile," with the double meaning of *nil* as denoting both indigo and the river, means "to put on mourning."[74] Black too is the color of mourning in Peru, worn for Catholic mourning rituals. White is a traditional mourning color in Western and Eastern cultures, such as China, Korea, and Japan as well as in Hindu ceremonies. However, many cultures have their own distinct mourning colors, such as red and black in Nigeria or Ghana.

In most cultures, although not all, the principal garment worn during the mourning ceremony is tailored in the silhouette of contemporary, fashionable dress; accessories such as veils, sashes, shawls, or armbands may be added to the garment to distinguish its function within the mourning process. In cultures where traditional dress still plays an important role in ceremonial rituals, such as in Korea, Japan, or in the First Nations, for instance, the mourner's garment is generally distinct from the silhouette of his or her daily wear.[75]

However, some countries have adopted the black garments of Western mourning dress in a modification of their own traditions. At the 2009 funeral of the former Korean President Roh, Moo-hyun, his widow, attended the funeral in a black hanbok, eschewing the traditional, Confucian white mourning garments and hewing to Western mourning norms. According to Saet Byul Park and Marilyn DeLong, who have written about the adoption of the color black in contemporary Korean mourning dress between 2002 and 2014, although black mourning dress was almost uniformly adopted by men in the twentieth century, most of the female Korean mourners sampled held on to the traditional white garments through the twenty-first century, with a shift happening after 2009.[76] Saet Byul Park and DeLong credit this shift to the increasing visibility of Christianity and Catholicism traditions within Korean society, which have in turn influenced Buddhist and Confucian practices.[77] Although their research does not address the social discourse around this shift, they conclude that wearing traditional mourning dress in black (rather than white) is an example of a hybrid dress form that shows contemporary Korean society in transition between tradition and innovation.[78]

In some cultures where black is only used for mourning, such as in Peru, local markets have adapted to making the traditionally bright-hued fabrics and garments in black to appeal to tourists, who view black as a wardrobe staple. As Blenda Femenías has noted in her examination of changing fashion practices in contemporary Peru, the color "'black' circulates between the realm of death and funerals, and the dominion of tourist fashion."[79] Femenías also notes that the use of black mourning clothing in Peru may be a legacy of Spanish colonial rule, as is common in many Latin American countries.[80] When traveling through Palestine in 2017, I engaged with a vendor in Hebron on the black *keffiyahs* in stock, which she also maintained were only sold to tourists and not to locals. There is so much sadness in the world, the vendor argued, why would a Palestinian buy something black when it is not needed? In Peru, unlike in Palestine, the color black also holds sacred mourning qualities, which are excised for the tourist market. "As sales are altered by tourism," Femenías notes, "objects formerly intended for purposes of mourning and commemoration are now made and marked for secular, rather than sacred, contexts." Like the vendor I met in Hebron, a Peruvian vendor also inquired of Femenías, "Why do gringos dress so sad?"[81]

Conclusion

For well over a century, from 1800 until the 1920s, elaborate and highly codified black ensembles were seen as external signifiers of grief, sadness, or loss in Europe and North America. Social conventions dictated that women don the most visible mourning garments during this period, but black-clad women also served as lightning rods for social anxiety surrounding death: women were expected to keep their mourning attire and emotions in control, but even then could be castigated for dressing too fashionably or not fashionably enough; for externalizing their grief too vocally or not enough; for adhering too strictly to the sartorial codes or not enough; for being too visible in public or not enough. The simplification and then end of codified mourning dress following World War I may have come as a relief for many women, who were free to grieve without needing to think about the message their clothing sent to the world, but conversely, the lack of specific mourning dress also rendered personal grief invisible. The three stages of nineteenth-century mourning dress, each with its own specific dress code, may have helped women make sense of their loss within socially recognized stages.

The invisibility of grief in the contemporary Western world, where, beyond dark garments worn the day of the funeral, there are almost no outward sartorial indicators of grief beyond the funeral day itself, is experienced as complicating the grieving process by some mourners today. The wide variety of bodily practices—from singing to dancing to storytelling to making art to tattooing—described in the edited volume *Grief and the Expressive Arts: Practices for Creating Meaning* help make the point that "bring[ing] the pain to the surface," as Malinda Ann Hill has written about her own experience of getting a memorial tattoo following pregnancy loss, provides essential opportunities externalize grief and encourages public communication about love and loss.[82] The memorial, or R.I.P. shirts, worn in the Black American community play a similar role of rendering Black grief visible—an important political statement in the context of the Movement for Black Lives.

Some cultures have maintained their traditional mourning dress, although most have dispensed with lengthy periods of wearing these garments as incompatible with contemporary life. The ubiquity of black as the color of mourning—and that of fashion—in the European and North American tradition has gained other cultures due to legacies of imperialism, colonialism, or globalization. The hashtags #funeralfashion and #funeraldress on the social media platform TikTok show women from all around the globe donning black or black-patterned dresses (white or red dresses with black patterns seem to be popular in Ghana); indeed, some of the most popular accounts using these hashtags are those of Ghanaian seamstresses who promote their latest creations for fashionable and appropriate funeral wear.[83] These videos, which are nearly all focused on female mourning attire, and which often revolve around providing viewers inspiration for what to wear (or provide satiric commentary on overly lavish mourning attire), have essentially replaced the fashion magazines of yore as tools to help people navigate and make sense of gendered and culturally determined sartorial practices of mourning.

Notes

1 The international press reported extensively on George Floyd's funeral, with several news outfits publishing photographic slideshows of the services, including Roy, "A Family and City in Mourning"; Ho, "'He'll change the world.'"
2 The photographs by Roy for *Time* feature several photographs of Floyd's family members posing together in their white mourning wear. Roy, "A Family and City in Mourning."
3 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*.
4 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, XX; Lou Taylor also provides a succinct summary of her thesis in Taylor, "Mourning Dress," 518–20.
5 Taylor, "Mourning Dress," 519.
6 See Whitmore, "'A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling'"; Bass-Krueger, "Mourning."
7 Ruberg, "Outer Display and Inner Insincerity"; Damousi, "Private Loss, Public Mourning."
8 See Pastoureau, *Black*; *Black: Masters of Black* notably the essays by Lou Taylor, "Black in Mourning" and Bianca M. du Mortier, "The Plague and Other Tales of Mourning."
9 *Death Becomes Her: A Century of Mourning Attire*, The Costume Institute, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 21 October 2014–1 February 2015; *Little Black Dress: From Mourning to Night*, Missouri History Museum, Saint Louis, April 2, 2016–September 5, 2016; *Black: Masters of Black in Fashion and Costume*, MoMu Antwerp, March–August 2010. The catalogue for the MoMu exhibition is cited above.
10 Buck, "The Trap Re-Baited", 32–7; Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, 370–5.
11 Vogelsang-Eastwood, "Birth, Marriage, and Death"; Park and DeLong, "Black in Korean Traditional Mourning Dress"; Fermenías, "'Why Do Gringos Life Black?'."
12 Pastoureau, *Black*.
13 Ruberg, "Outer Displays and Inner Insincerity."
14 Kent, "Wearing Black, Wearing Bows."
15 Damousi, "Private Loss, Public Mourning."
16 Taylor wrote about this process in *Mourning Dress*; see also Whitmore, "A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling."
17 Bass-Krueger, "Mourning Dress."
18 Brooks, "R.I.P. Shirts,"; Shreve, "A Fitting Memorial"; Fletcher, "Long Live Chill #LLC"; Conn, *Virtual Afterlives*.
19 Matt, *A Cultural History of Emotions*; Boddice, *The History of Emotions*; Rosenwein and Cristiani, *What Is the History of Emotions*.
20 See, for instance: Howarth, *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*; Jupp and Gittings, *Death in England*; Graham, *Death, Materiality and Mediation*; Frank, *Representations of Death in Nineteenth-Century US Writing and Culture*, notably the essay by Ann Schofield on "The Fashion of Mourning."
21 Toulson and Newby, "Introduction: Emotions and Materiality in Theory and Method," in *The Materiality of Mourning*, 4–10. *The Materiality of Mourning* includes an essay by Emily Brayshaw on "Remember Roland Leighton: Uniforms as the Materials of Memory and Mourning in World War I."
22 Idem.
23 Hallam and Hockney, *Death, Memory and Material Culture,* 13.
24 Toulson and Newby, "Introduction," 11.
25 Taylor, *Mourning Dress,* 120–2.
26 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 122.
27 *De Gracieuse* 33, September 5, 1895, 1 cited in Ruberg, "Outer Display and Inner Insincerity," 248.
28 Kent, "Wearing Black, Wearing Bows," 561.
29 Kent, "Wearing Black, Wearing Bows," 562.
30 Ruberg, "Outer Display and Inner Insincerity," 543.
31 Stearns, "In Private," 143.
32 See Matt, "Introduction," 10–11.
33 Literature from the history of emotions is rich with information about private and public displays of grief and sadness in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, most of the key overviews neglect the material culture of emotional display. For instance, *Histoire des*

Émotions, edited by Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, and Georges Vigarello features papers on almost every aspect of emotional history except for the objects which people use to express themselves.

34 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 126.
35 Taylor, "Black for Mourning," 133.
36 Cited in DeLorme, *Mourning Art & Jewelry*, 53.
37 Taylor, "Black for Mourning," 130.
38 Jalland, "Victorian Death and its Decline."
39 Buck, "The Trap Re-Baited," 35.
40 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 134.
41 Howarth, "Fashion and Costume," 191.
42 Ruberg, "Outer Displays and Inner Insincerity," 251.
43 Jalland, "Victorian death and its Decline," 242–4.
44 Buck, "The Trap Re-Baited," 37.
45 *The Woman's World*, 1889, 418 cited in Buck, "The Trap Re-Baited," 37.
46 "Jamais le code du deuil ne fut moins strictement appliqué qu'en ces temps d'angoisses où les femmes les plus éprouvées ne peuvent pas toujours manifester par des témoignages extérieurs, par la manière dont elles s'habillent ou par la vie qu'elles mènent, la douleur qui les étreint et leur détachement de toutes choses." "A travers la mode: le deuil," *La Mode Illustrée,* October 29, 1916, 389. Translated by author.
47 Idem.
48 "Si le costume de deuil a le souci avant tout d'être correct il doit cependant être à la mode et la suivre dans ses grandes lignes." "Le deuil correct," *Femina*, March 1917, 41. Translated by author.
49 "À celles de nos lectrices qui considèrent cette part faite au blanc comme incompatible avec un deuil sévère (et sur ce point nous sommes d'accord avec elles contre la mode), nous conseillons de porter comme toilette de campagne simple et pratique, une jupe noire en toile [...]."Thevenot, "À travers la mode," *La Mode Illustrée*, August 22, 1915, 2. Translated by author.
50 "C'est alors que la femme naturellement élégante se laisse séduire par les mille bibelots jolis produits de l'ingénieuse fabrication parisienne et qui, par leur grâce pimpante, ajoutent à sa beauté." "Frivolités: les fantaisies du deuil," *La Femme de France*, September 12, 1915, 6. Translated by author.
51 See the recommendation from Bernard Boutet de Monvel, written in the October issue of the *Gazette du Bon Ton,* referenced in Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 270.
52 "Sense and Sensibility in Modern Mourning," *Vogue*, March 1, 1938, 135.
53 Images of the funeral were published in all major news outfits. A selection of photographs of Jacqueline Kennedy in mourning can be seen in "The Winter of Her Despair," *Vanity Fair*, September 18, 2014.
54 "Big Moments from Prince Philip's Funeral," *The New York Times*, April 17, 2021.
55 Burack, "See All the Photos from Prince Philip's Memorial Service," *Town and Country*, March 29, 2022.
56 Brooks, "R.I.P. Shirts," 810.
57 Shreve, "A Fitting Memorial."
58 213.
59 Conn, *Virtual Afterlives;* Fletcher, "Long Live Chill #LLC," 216.
60 Brooks, "R.I.P. shirts," 822.
61 Pastoureau, *Black*.
62 Pastoureau, *Black*, 35.
63 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 249.
64 Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes*, 373.
65 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 252.
66 Gessner, "Little Black Dress," 482.
67 Kent, "Wearing Black, Wearing Bows," 556.
68 "Non, ce ne sont pas là nos veuves." Frédéric Masson, "Le problème de demain," *L'Écho de Paris,* April 12, 1915, 1. Translated by author.
69 Maurice de Waleffe, "Une veuve de la guerre peut-elle se remarier?," Femina, June 1917, 15–16.
70 "Là, je vous le conseille. Remariez-vous! C'est la vie, comme on dit ... et la vie aura toujours raison contre la mort." Translated by author. Idem.

71 "Ces dames sont jeunes et vêtues de la tête aux pieds d'un voile de crêpe noir austère […] pour un louis –prix de guerre—, elles laissent tomber leurs voiles: le noir n'est pas toujours habillé." "Eros en deuil," *Le Cri de Paris*, November 29, 1914, 10. Translated by author.
72 "The Début of the Winter Mode," *Vogue*, October 1, 1926, 69.
73 Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 273.
74 Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Pincott, 1892), quoted in Vogelsang-Eastwood, "Birth, Marriage, and Death," 429.
75 There is no monograph or edited volume published on global sartorial mourning practices, so research was conducted by searching the internet, Google images, and stock photo sites for the mourning dress of a range of countries and cultures.
76 Park and DeLong, "What is the Meaning of Black?," 91.
77 Park and DeLong, "What is the Meaning of Black?," 92.
78 Park and DeLong, "What is the Meaning of Black?," 94.
79 Fermenías, "Why Do Gringos Like Black?," 93.
80 Femenías, "Why Do Gringos Like Black?," 97.
81 Femenías, "Why Do Gringos Like Black?," 108.
82 Malinda Ann Hill, "Memorial Tatooing—Making Grief Visible" in Niemeyer, *Grief and the Expressive Arts*, 53.
83 For instance, a Tiktok video by Ghanaian dressmaker @ola_ella on fashionable funeral outfits for 2022 boasts 53,000 views while that for @fashionhusofficial responding to a request to show "a tyle for my grandma funeral" has 70,600 views.

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22 Men's Fashion 200822

Peter McNeil

The study of men's fashion, like fashion generally, follows certain consistent themes as well as transforming the remit of its study at key points of political, social, and economic change. The "youthquake" and social revolutions of the post–World War II period, for example, saw the range of clothing options transformed for men. At the same time, the way in which the topic began to be seriously studied in the post 1970s period, began to consider sexual, racial, colonial, and post-colonial specificity as well as the gender dimorphism, class difference and social change beloved of early-twentieth-century sociology. The historical and contemporary are often seen as antithetical: the historian is accused of abandoning the quotidian and the co-joined contemporary theory used to analyze it, and the contemporary cultural historian sometimes pays insufficient attention to the complex historiographies of the past. The focus on the "eternal present" that tints neo-liberal societies finds a willing partner in the tendency of modern universities teaching fashion design as well as fashion studies to privilege "contemporary" themes and topics (it is often said that this is what students "want"). This is my own experience as a design historian working on dress amongst other things for 30 years—one is generally defined as one thing or the other. Approaches to contemporary fashion theory that privilege the "century of fashion," 1860–1960, still often argue that there is no fashion or fashion system before the mid-nineteenth century, leaving the historiography of the past 220 years fractured. Into that mix in recent years has come the demand to "decolonize" fashion and to embrace instead the rich clothing cultures of all times and places as equally valid. Fashion theory of the past 25 years tended to value the semantic, theoretical, and conceptual operations of dress. The historians of the clothing economy tended to work separately from the dress theorists. The rise of interest in materiality and the compulsion to address sustainability has broadened what is commonly studied, once again.[1] Yet there is much to explore in the role of materials, materiality, and material possibilities in creating new fashion artifacts and images for men across the past 200 years. Certain templates of men's fashion as well as everyday uniforms—from dungaree/overalls to military dress—allowed contemporary designers to creatively play with the repertoire of men's fashion, often proposing new models of masculinity as a result. In this challenging assignment, addressing men's fashion since 1800, I attempt to explain some of the large shifts in longitudinal clothing culture for men while at the same time indicating the academic landscape around the study of men's clothes. The major frames that structure the account include the cult of youth and ongoing Romanticism, the secularization of sport, the influence of modern warfare in generating men's fashions, the tendency to prefer modern ideas of comfort and convenience, and the transformation of fashion knowledge and fashion urbanism from print to hyperreality.

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The colony of New South Wales was less than 40 years old when an entrepreneurial Jewish tailor named I.G. Maelzer arrived in Sydney town from Calcutta, India, by 1831. He advertised his "Saxony cloths, cashmeres, kerseymeres, moleskins, velvets, silks" and "Military and Naval accoutrements." He joined other convict tailors who had arrived on the First Fleet: a "John Jaques" [sic] was described in the *Sydney Gazette* (the first printed newspaper) in 1803. Maelzer arrived at a time when migration from India to the Australian colony of many retired British officers and other Anglo-Indians was increasing, and when imports from India to the colony increased ninefold.[2] He had printed for him what is the first trade card for a tailor in the Australian colony (Figure 22.1).

The urbane image is a contrast to the generally received idea of a rough and ready New South Wales penal colony.[3] The engraving on his card shows a frock coat and hairstyle that is completely up to date by northern hemisphere standards, with a puffy shoulder and elegant, curly hair. It closely resembles a drawing by Daniel Maclise of the well-known dandy Benjamin Disraeli (1833). Such suits were intended not only for any "urbanites" in the small colonial outpost and expanding mercantile town. Maelzer announced in the *Sydney Gazette* (1831) that country customers could use his trade-card to "have their orders for dress executed by measuring themselves" according to the directions. Men many thousands of miles from Euromerican centers knew about contemporary fashion, and may have worn it, as opposed to utilitarian, military, and colonial prison dress. What it meant to them is less clear, as men tended to leave fewer written comments on their dress than women. Men's fashion might have been a tool of European colonialism in the nineteenth century, used to confirm notions of European superiority. Non-Europeans often reacted to such men's fashion by playing with it in parodic ways, such as the wearing of "stolen" military "red coats" without their trousers by Indigenous Australian men in the first decades of the New South Wales colony. Such Indigenous men were called "sans culottes" in a poem mocking their purported alcoholism in 1838.[4] There was a close relationship with the European men's dress adjusted for Indian and other South Asian locations, as many colonial goods were shipped to Australia via India and parts of the climate were similar: indeed, it was frequently said that Australia was almost as unpleasantly hot in summer as India.[5]

The first part of the chapter will elucidate the Eurocentrism generally encountered in accounts of men's fashion in European languages. It will indicate the importance of fashion to men's social and political identity in colonial and non-metropolitan settings around the world. The second half of the nineteenth century is often seen as a complex period in which different and clashing forces were at play. What was the role of artists, writers, bohemians, and expatriates in forming new conceptions of fashion as well as manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and merchants? In the nineteenth century, the fashions for men set at the European courts of the previous century were replaced with more sober woollen suits, suitable for the new world of business and the layout of the modern city with its wide streets, boulevards, and systems of transportation. Despite this new sobriety, some men, particularly young men, continued to pursue the utmost elegance in dressing. Sport began to transform the appearance of men, an influence that began in the mid- to late-eighteenth century and continued apace for the next 200 years. Although it is often claimed that nineteenth-century men's fashion was "dull," we often see instead a suave elegance expressed in garment such as the short waistcoat and fine tailoring of suits, the carrying of accessories such as gloves, and the importance of grooming the beard, moustache, and hair.

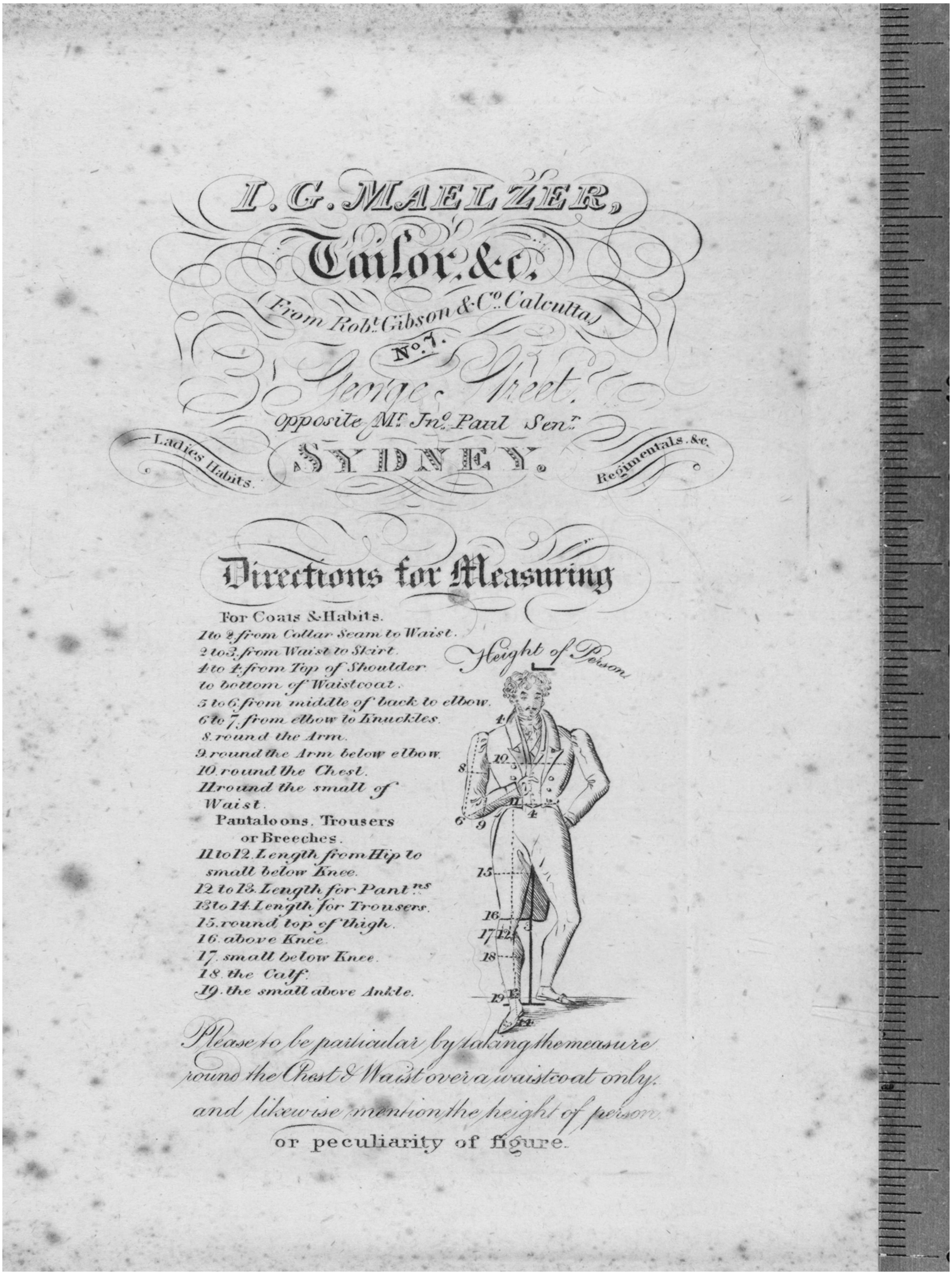

Figure 22.1 I.G. Maelzer, Tailor, &c. From Robt. Gibson & Co. Calcutta, No. 7, George Street ... Sydney. Trade card, engraved c1835, 13.6 × 8cm. Illus. The New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory, 1835. Collection Peter McNeil. Photograph David Brazil.

The second half of the chapter traverses the twentieth century. The first half of that century saw epochal changes in the very notion of fashion. That period opens with the Great War. Throughout the century the needs and locations of contemporary warfare introduced and reinterpreted garments, colors, and material technologies to the wider male wardrobe. The manufacture of uniforms for two world wars accelerated standardization and lowered price points. The production and distribution of clothes was marked by mass production more so than in women's garments, which were often produced in smaller batches or units. That most woollen men's suits were bought ready-made indicates that fashion was an important aspect of modern democracy. Most of us wear mainly cotton and cotton-synthetic mixes today, but once woollens were king. The new mania for driving cars and motorbikes also demanded new types of comfortable belted jackets and leather caps. The majority of the male wardrobe seen outside particular formal or work environments is also heavily derived from earlier twentieth century sporting prototypes. The knitted, synthetic jersey fibres typically used in sports clothing now dominate casual wear; they require no ironing and dry very quickly. Their status now as "fast fashion" leads to a massive problem: they are currently difficult to recycle due to fibre separation, and their textiles often stain and deteriorate easily. Men's fashion was also influenced, amplified, and co-created by developments in the mass media, from radio to the MTV video. Fashion contributed greatly to the substantial reshaping of ideas about men and masculinity in the post–World War II period.

From Courtier to City Gent

The most expensive garments for men 200 years ago were the clothes required to visit or appear at court, in the presence of the aristocracy. The *habit à la française* (c. 1760) is also an example of an early trans-national or global fashion, for Europe at the very least, but was also worn by the English in India and the West Indies in the eighteenth century, although sometimes in a different, lighter colorway, even pure white.[6] Men's chamois leather breeches were one example of new, comfortable fashions influenced by the cult of the horse. Although they were not formal dress, they began to appear regularly in men's portraits from the 1790s. Ann Hollander noted in her work *Sex and Suits* (1994) that wool, leather and linen create for men a sense of "poetic harmony with his natural domain," rather than the sense of opposition created by glossy and smooth textiles such as satin and silk.[7] Boots, English style "jockey caps," whips and other equestrian accessories became the epitome of glamour for French men in the decade before the Revolution. Such tastes were expensive: the Prince de Ligne wrote "Horses and gigs will be the ruin of young men in Paris."[8] But no man of social standing wore trousers in the eighteenth century until after the Revolution, including artisans. Trousers were for active workers such as the river-men and sailors. This was also the case for the North Americans, who complained of the luxury of the French and other Continental courts and wore either simple black or even homespun cloth to make their point.[9] Nonetheless, they kept their knee breeches, as pantaloons were too far from the respectable fashion ideal. The history of men's fashion is full of hybrid clothing admixtures. The Māori of New Zealand, for example, sometimes made European-style men's waistcoats with a conventional silk back and a front of woven and dyed harakeke (flax woven in a Māori technique) that were gifted to European (Pakeha) farmers as a token of relationship.[10] Māori, as well as Australian Aboriginal people, often wore combinations of local and European dress during the colonial period. These were clothing acts that ranged from adaptation, to rebellion, and parody.[11]

Managing the Body

Being fashionable was about much more than the garments. All guides to courtly behavior based on the Italian Renaissance precept, "The Courtier" (1528) by Baldassare Castiglione, insisted that to be elegant one also had to make it look easy. Education was important, as was training in movement by a professional dancing master or instruction in fencing or horse-riding. Just as now, the clothes were not meant to "wear you." Furthermore, the body and the dressed body were part of wider cultural understandings and philosophical structures. Barbara Stafford notes in her history of perception and the visualized body in the Enlightenment that reformers, whether they be Cartesians or Augustinian Jansenists, demanded that "showy ostentation" and "of the cosmetic imagination" be usurped.[12] Within neo-classical vision, rococo "color … was the antagonist to fixity. It was connected to change and superficial appearances that seized the eye."[13] Lessing reminded artists that "the civilized Thebans enacted a law commanding idealization in art. Digressions towards outlandishness were legally punishable."[14]

Many aspects of rococo dress continued in later periods. As the long eighteenth century transitioned to the nineteenth, much attention was paid to the wig. French men protected their hair with parasols, which were considered effeminate by the English until the Victorian period. Men did not give up their wigs with the French Revolution; William Pitt's *Hair Powder Act of 1795* (a luxury tax which levied money for the war against France) levied one guinea a year for the right to powder the hair—hence, users were called "guinea pigs." Pitt's motive was both practical and symbolic: "flouring" the hair diminished the ingredients required for bread.[15] Charles James Fox in turn mocked a tax on something as unstable as fashion.[16] A list of licensed men was published to encourage reporting of those who had not paid, an unusual act in fashion history: 46,000 men were paying the tax in 1812, so not a huge amount of the population.[17] Cutting the hair as an option to deal with the tax was known as "cropping," and some men were alleged to have worn plain, woollen wigs as an alternative.

Men also continued to wear perfumes, which were believed to have health attributes in staving off miasmas of infection, as well as smelling novel. The scents worn by Regency and Victorian gentlemen survive in some old-fashioned formulas and surprise us today with their very strong scents of flowers such as carnation and the musky smell of the Turkish steam bath (*hammam*). Jane Welsh Carlyle said of the famous fop the Comte D'Orsay in 1859 that he looked well but was "of no sex": the Comte wore tonal colors such as a blue satin cravat, and his gloves were scented with different *eaux de cologne*.[18] There has been a fashionable revival of such blends recently by companies such as the British firm, Penhaligon's. A great many satirical prints from around 1800–1810 depict men preparing their toilette, with copious amounts of perfume, make up and linen, as well as corsetry and even fake calves attached in their stockings. Such mannerisms often associated with military dress as the uniforms of the early nineteenth century were splendid in color and cut very tight. Colin McDowell argues that the "sexual blatancy" of such dress contrasted with the increasingly prudish tenor of later nineteenth-century society.[19]

Despite the appeal to our contemporary eyes of early-nineteenth century officers' dress, Philip Mansel has persuasively argued that such dress met with great resistance from upper-class English and French men. Unlike the splendid and very expensive *habit habillé* of the old regime, rank might be legible but not always status. To some men, uniformity felt like livery. By the 1850s, all British government officials had to wear civil uniforms, distinguished in rank by the amount of embroidery. Full court dress for particular occasions with a bag wig and sword continued until 1939.[20] The element of obligation is particularly important for subsequent counter cultural attitudes and developments around prescribed and military dress.

Dangerous Dress

In post-Revolutionary Paris, wearing the dress of the *Ancien Régime* became dangerous. The safest dress was that of the working man, the so called "sans culottes" who did not wear knee breeches, but rather trousers. They often wore the *carmagnole*, a rough, woollen jacket. King Louis XVI never wore trousers in prison, but was humiliated by being depicted wearing the Phrygian cap, the symbol of Roman democracy.

Directoire fashion for men was very erotic. Enormous fallen collars, massive revers and very wide covered buttons contrast with the "absence" of the cut away suit jacket coat, which reveals the man's sex defiantly. Fashionable men replaced knee breeches with tapering trousers, a garment from the wardrobe of seamen, buckled shoes were replaced with boots and even shoe-lacing. The *Incroyable* was particularly fond of the stripe, a motif which became a men's fashion standard for the next 200 years, eventually appearing in striped woollen cloth for suiting and in the 1920s as men's neck ties (derived from regimental and club dress and popularized in the United States by the Prince of Wales). The stripe was one very successful way to look democratic while remaining stylish. Stripes became popular when reproduced on expensive silk only in the 1780s. They remained connected with leisure into the twentieth century when the sailor's matelot (striped cotton or knitted pullover) was worn by figures such as Gabrielle Chanel and Pablo Picasso on vacation in the south of France in the 1920s.

Bohemianism

In 1799, Napoleon made his coup d'état, and fashion changed once again. Napoleon would have had little time for sartorial misfits, but Paris was spawning just that. The *barbus* were outlandish artists and artisans such as hairdressers and tailors who wore little beards and capes. It appears that some even showed their chest in a *décolletée* manner, a fashion that had not been seen since the Renaissance and that did not return until the 1960s. The wife of the artist Jean-Antoine Gleizes (Madame Aglaé) wrote this of such men in 1800: "Long white trousers which go up to the armpits, yellow shoes closely moulding the foot, held by straps, a red waist-coat tied in the back and with a very low neckline showing very little or no shirt, a long beard, short hair, and then a piece of red cloth thrown over the shoulder."[21] This is a very important aspect of men's fashion for the subsequent two centuries: *bohemianism*, which had many later resurgences such as the deliberately scruffy hair and clothes worn by young men in the 1830s–1850s, seen in many surviving daguerreotypes, and with the hippy and flower power movement a century later, in the 1960s.[22]

In complete contrast to this sloppy bohemianism was the revival of court dress enforced by the Emperor Napoleon. For court, Napoleon insisted upon silk or velvet embroidered suits. Knee breeches were reintroduced as compulsory. The new format, with a neo-classical shape, placed new emphasis on the shoulders, which were meant to be broad. There was extensive use of gold and silver thread and it was this period that created the dress uniforms and template for dress that had to be worn at courts by diplomats and visitors in Europe until World War II. The old court dress of the *Ancien*

Régime under Louis XVIII was now laughed at, yet the informal *frac* was considered unacceptable as being too informal, and so the only alternative was to focus on military dress as a *de facto* court dress. An officer wrote: "Since the court has become completely military, to the great detriment of our industries … it is no longer possible to go to the palace in habit bourgeois [civilian dress] … so in order not to become confused with the footmen, I must demand permission to wear épaulettes."[23] The Napoleonic wars generated new military dress that generated countless fashions; for example, the "hussar-style" jackets with fur trims and elegant frogging (little boys' jackets continued to be braided in Hussar and other military styles into the late nineteenth century).[24] The uniforms worn at the Congress of Vienna further consolidated this trend. Dress types such as this were reworked by Vivienne Westwood in the 1990s; very similar designs by her were worn by hyper-muscular male models at the Love Ball, an AIDS fundraiser in Vienna in the early 1990s.

Bucks of Elegance

Historians of the fashion press have argued that it was only in the Napoleonic period that fashion news began to be addressed mainly to women. The fashion periodical, which had embraced images, stories, and news about men from its birth in the 1760s, seemed to turn away from men after the French Revolution. Men appear only twice in the 1799 issues of *Correspondence des Dames*, which covered fashion generally. The more entrenched association of women's light reading and amusement with the world of fashion does not mean that men themselves lost interest in clothing. In fact, the years after the Revolution created in England and in France an intense period of reflection and fascination by and for men's fashion. It was the period of the "dandy."

The writer Barbey d'Aurevilly wrote that before the term dandy became widely adopted in the 1790s at Eton, the "despots of elegance" were known as "bucks," an English term that refers to a male animal, but which also has a sense that is untranslatable.[25] "Buck" or Beau Brummel was the heroic ideal and he was not just noted for his fine dressing, but also his house in Chapel Street, his library, his furniture, his horses, his snuff boxes, his canes, and his Sèvres porcelain.[26] The English dandy of the Regency period, who stripped back his wardrobe to the essentials of the finest shirt, cravat linen and woollen broadcloth, with perfectly-blacked boots by a maker such as George Hoby of St. James's Street, and accessories such as a white thorn-wood cane, became a pan-European ideal. As Elizabeth Amann remarks, the dandy constituted "an erasure of effort" and was a reductive fashion figure—whereas the earlier macaroni had added volume and accessories to their looks.[27] The dandy's eager preparations to leave the house were hilariously reported by the print satirists of their day. It was claimed that garments became so tight that men such as the Comte d'Artois had to be lowered into his leather breeches which were so smooth that "not even the most clairvoyant eye could discover a single pleat."[28] Dandies were meant to be thin, and Carolyn A. Day has demonstrated how in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the medical condition tuberculous as a wasting disease was connected to positive beauty attributes of litheness, a white flushed complexion, large pupil-eyes, false hair (as hair was weakened by the disease), sensitivity, and glamour for men and women of the affluent classes (for the poor it was seen as degeneration).[29] The dandy and diarist Captain Rees Howell Gronow described such gentlemen "remarkable for their eccentricities of dress and manners" as the "lions of the day both in London and Paris"; he noted a certain extravagant

Captain T- who kept perfect English carriages and horses, lived in two different hotels at the same time, and dressed in capacious trousers and a coat "remarkable for its wide, bagged sleeves … and a pair of golden spurs with rowels of the circumference of a small dessert plate."[30] The actor "Romeo" Coats appeared in Bath and the Haymarket, London, in gaudy satin and furs, real diamond buttons and buckles, and a "singular shell-shaped carriage, drawn by two fine white horses."[31] The foppish Lord Petersham promoted a new type of greatcoat and claimed to use a different box of snuff every day of the year: when complimented on a pretty Wedgwood box he lisped "Yes, it is a nice summer box but would not do for winter wear."[32] Such dandies directed even the appearance of their grooms: Petersham was well known for his equipage of fine, brown horses with matching harness, and a groom dressed in the same color coat to the ground with a cockaded hat.[33]

France remained a center of fashion production and innovation in the nineteenth century. However, much of the fashionable template was now derived from English rather than continental taste. A disciplined sobriety became desirable. Harvey has pointed out how attention to perfect linens led to the ideal "scrubbed cleanliness" of the later Victorian period.[34] An aniline dye for black was patented in 1863, making black easier to fix.[35] Careful inspection of cloth and clothing was the basis of this approach to fashion, which ironically was also meant to be inconspicuous. Gloves of different hues for day and evening, often yellow for day, and finely crafted boots and shoes that made the feet look small, were the desired accessories. Such foppery was often projected onto suggestions of homosexuality, generally associated with foreigners and cosmopolitan affectation. The Australian author Marcus Clarke described the following scene set in Hobart Town, Tasmania (van Diemen's Land) in 1838: "Clad in glossy black, of the most fashionable clerical cut, with dandy boots, and gloves of lightest lavender—a white silk overcoat hinting that its wearer was not wholly free from sensitiveness to sun and heat—the Reverend Meekin tripped daintily to the post office, and deposited his letter."[36]

The dandy's other essential accessories included lorgnettes and spying glasses so that he could look back at others looking at him. Such lens technology owed their derivation from Enlightenment optical experimentation and as Stafford argues, privileged sight over touch.[37] Magnification was also gendered: it "became associated with the positive male virtue of seeing problems intensely and analytically."[38] Nonetheless, poet-dandies of mid-nineteenth-century France continued some attributes of the rococo courtier. Barbey d'Aurevilly kept a diary in 1838, in which he described staying in bed all morning, drinking chocolate, seeing the hairdresser and tailor from his bed, taking lunch at the famous restaurant *Grand Véfour* (still in existence), looking at the bookshop, florist, and glove shop, then dinner and a visit to an actress or theater and bed around two am.[39] It was a delightful period for well to do fashionable men and it was very much about being young, thin, and optimistic, rather like the 1960s. Fashionable suits had tight, puffed jacket sleeves that stayed in fashion in the 1830s (similar to the Maelzer image that opened this chapter), and were often made in rich tones such as plum and claret and in cloths including cotton plush (velvet). Such attire was accompanied by natural hair and hearty good looks. Slim fitting leather shoes or tight boots were fashionable options. Subsequent periods remained fascinated by early dandyism. London in the 1960s had a pop singer called "Beau Brummell": a cross between a teddy boy and a Regency dandy, he had a large quiff of his own blonde hair and was photographed opening a new menswear shop arriving by open carriage.

Everything the dandy was consumed was a commodity, and he therefore underscores theories of "capitalist modernity" and "modern urban existence" with its new spaces, open views, commercial leisure, and atmosphere of unsatisfied melancholy and nonchalance.[40] Philip Mansel argues that the prestige of the dandy was in part that it "enabled members of the aristocracy to make up in cut and elegance what they had lost in visual splendor" with the decline of the richly decorated *habit habillé*.[41] Aileen Ribeiro has pointed out that the rebuttal of color for men was seen by some such as Gautier as serving "to focus attention on the face and hands" and that dandyism was in decline by the 1840s, when the "domesticity of Queen Victoria's court encouraged bourgeois sobriety."[42] The dandy also functioned as something of a safety valve between the old values of the aristocracy (which depended on inheritance and birth) and those of the ascendant middle classes (which depended on money and work). More generally, the dandy's use of black speaks to Harvey's thesis that wearing black oscillates between "intensity" and "effacement: with importance, and with the putting on of impersonality."[43]

The other function of the dandy was to shock the bourgeoisie and to cultivate the self as a work of art. There was a general rejection by the younger generation of artists and writers of the materialism and vulgarity of contemporary society in which profitmaking had replaced older aesthetic ideals. In Renaissance Italy, many towns and Republics had prescribed dress for adult men. Uniforms or livery that was gifted to the professions and servants meant that there was less choice in clothing than might be imagined today. This permitted young men—who were not yet qualified to belong to professions—to engage with individualistic fashion more vigorously. It is this passionate desire to be thoughtful and distinctive in appearance that has kept the spirit of dandyism alive as an inspiration to the present day. The focus on the self as a work of art—which is known as *Bildung* in German thought—is the basis of the Romantic notion of creating the self through aesthetic choices. It also encouraged the notion that fashion is for the young and the outsider. The classic texts on dandyism are Balzac's *Traité de la vie élégante* (1830), Barbey d'Aurevilly's essay on Beau Brummell (1843), and Baudelaire's *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (1863).

Men's fashion was well documented within the birth of photography. Even if the men posing for their photo might be wearing their Sunday best, the range of fashion is striking and there is nothing whatsoever dull about the early Victorian period (the years from 1830 to 1850). The daguerreotypes taken at this time of young men wearing enormous propeller-like cravats, fine silk and satin waistcoats and stocks, enormous plush top hats, over-sized coats, and tight checked trousers reveal the wide range of clothing choices available to nineteenth-century men. Enormous cravats were fashionable in the 1840s, some embroidered at the ends, in many colors and varieties. For private leisure, square-toed embroidered slippers were bought ready-made or made up by a wife or lover. Dressing gowns were sometimes boned so that men kept a good figure at home.

Apart from this sartorial particularity, most men aimed to own at least one suit by the nineteenth century. The United States was repeatedly described throughout the nineteenth century as the best-dressed nation in the world. (Figure 22.2)

Ready-made clothing made this possible: an Englishman observing 1840s Boston wrote: "In all this flitting crowd, you can scarcely point to a single individual who is not well dressed … there is no nation on earth in which the coat goes so far as to make the man."[44] Most tailors in colonial America stocked ready-made goods. The first large manufacturer of men's clothing was the Army in Philadelphia, that began to produce for the War of 1812. Large amounts of woollen and cotton textiles were produced on power looms by the 1840s; some weaving technologies that sped up production were adopted in the United States earlier than in Britain. Also, by the 1840s, ready-made men's clothes

Figure 22.2 Hammerslough, Saks & Co. makers of fine clothing. The various shapes of the human body that we provide for, lithograph, c. 1890. Library of Congress.

were sold in five storey establishments that astonished visitors for their "size and grandeur."[45] The sewing machine was of such focus in the United States that 7,339 patents were issued from 1842–1895.[46] Between the 1850s and 1860s sewing machines that could manage curved seams began to be used for the first time for men's suits. A frock coat that took 16.5 hours by hand would take 2 hours, 38 minutes by machine; a satin vest that took 7 hours, 19 minutes by hand took 1 hour, 14 minutes by machine.[47] By the 1880s, there were electric machines; the rate of sewing shifted from 800 stitches a minute by treadle to 4,000 stitches a minute by machine.[48] Machines could cut through 40 layers of cloth in 1893.[49] Most of the workers in these industries were immigrants. Coats were no longer made laboriously by one tailor but once a pattern was established, each component was subcontracted to about 40 workers with typically lower levels of skill. Some factories centralized operations with as many as 6,000 people in Hart, Schaffner, and Marx in Chicago in 1910.[50] Clothing costs declined rapidly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Fast fashion had arrived.

Photography is a good proof that colonial men often embraced high fashion. A rare surviving image shows an unknown man of fashion in colonial Sydney, Australia, photographed by James Gow, George St Sydney, c1855, wearing a spotted double-breasted waistcoat and an enormous taffeta cravat. (Figure 22.3)

Figure 22.3 Unknown man of fashion, c1853, daguerrotype by American photographer James Gow, George St, Sydney (arrived Sydney 1853). Collection Peter McNeil. Photograph David Brazil. Courtesy Martin Kamer, Zug.

Gow had arrived in Sydney from San Francisco in 1853. Men who spent too much time with women and indulged in luxury and vices were connected in the colonial mind with the figure of the "cavalier servant," and such behavior was blamed for everything from failures of policing to the rise of homosexuality. Fashionable men who frequented the theaters of Melbourne in the 1860s were called "poodles" and some wore bright vermilion pomaded hair parted down the middle, white waistcoats and carried eyeglasses and umbrellas, even when they were not required.[51]

On the other hand, the colonial Australian gold rush saw the rise of large numbers of traveling salesmen and businessmen who required respectable but fashionable "business fashion" suits for long journeys in a country before railways. How did men on the Australian goldfields engage with fashion, and how was such fashion retailing structured for men? Melissa Bellanta argues that such men deliberately spurned top hats and swallow tail suits and wore instead short, loose-lined jackets (known as sacks in North America, the term was not used in Australia, jackets being described more by the cloth from which they were made), narrow trousers, bowler hats, white shirts and patterned waistcoats, neckties, jewelery such as pearl tie pins, and natty facial hair. Such clothing can be observed in the Holtermann archive, a series of glass plate negatives of almost all the inhabitants of the gold mining area of Hill End (near Bathurst, New South Wales) and Gulgong, in which the images can be blown up to reveal minute details.[52] The prospectors on the goldfields wore fashionable hats and belts with utilitarian trousers, rather like rodeo or cowboy dress in the twentieth century. Photography is also proof, as argued by Ribeiro, that men's suits were often messy, creased and crumpled when worn in daily life, particularly those of working professionals such as the famous photograph by Robert Howlett of engineer Isambard Brunel (1857).[53]

Wilde Dress

The clothes of the *Ancien Régime* of eighteenth -century France and England have been a constant inspiration for men of subsequent ages. Eccentricity in English dress is a rich vein of cultural thought which positioned the "natural singularity" of famous individuals as expressing "a very British notion of liberty" and the English constitution.[54] Revivals of Georgian taste have varied as differently as the interest in colored gem-stone rings and fine silk waistcoats worn in the nineteenth century by aesthetes, to the New Romantic musical fantasies of the 1980s crafted by Vivienne Westwood for the flamboyant singer Adam Ant. French designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier and John Galliano played creatively with this sartorial repertoire in the 1980s and 1990s. Men were offered clothing adorned with printed or woven flowers, which many people found feminine. It has been proposed by cultural historians that the verticality of such floral motifs suits the proportions of the dressed human body. Certainly, until the last decades of the eighteenth century, the woven and embroidered textiles for men's dress revolved around flowers and floriate forms, a fact that turns on its head the association of flowers with femininity.

The appearance of fashionable men was of particular interest within late-nineteenth-century Decadence, a cultural movement that privileged experience and modern aesthetics. The popularizer of Decadence, sometimes also called more politely the Aesthetic Movement, was Oscar Wilde, along with the artist James Abbot McNeill Whistler, and other writers, designers, and aesthetes of the time. Stafford argues that the *fin-de-siècle* Symbolists stand in a lineage from artist-theorists of the Romantic period such as David Pierre Giottin Humbert de Superville (1770–1849), who published a proto-semiotic theory in which "easily recognisable signs were charged with potential emotions" and in which concrete symbols whether they be faces, insignia or clothing "meant something."[55] Whistler sometimes wore in public white cotton trousers with a black overcoat, a "harmony in black and white" as Mortimer Menpes recorded.[56] Oscar Wilde was notable for his fur coats, gem-stone rings, and "loud" colored silk waistcoats. He had his hair curled regularly by a Parisian hairdresser. Wilde argued for a dress reform and a return to knee breeches rather than trousers and soft velvet suits. Although this daywear was not widely adopted by everyday men, for the space of the smoking room and the bedroom, well-to-do men embraced opulent smoking jackets made of materials as different as striped silk, Indian cashmere or the branded silks that covered cigar boxes and enjoyed wearing Turkish-style embroidered smoking hats and slippers. This was a ready-made exoticism which today would be viewed as cultural appropriation, but at the time was very much about a deliberate spurning of European bourgeois materialism. Eventually it would become the "bare foot luxury," a concept expressed by Italians in the 1960s–70s that suggested that wearing Indonesian sarongs and even going shoeless and topless in a beach locale such as Bali was the most decadent fashion choice of all.[57]

In the late nineteenth century, avant-garde artists in Paris were already wearing second-hand clothes from two generations earlier, that they adopted to appear "bohemian." The fashionable and well-connected Australian artist Charles Conder picked up things from the flea markets in the 1890s in a deliberate attempt to insert himself into an older Paris ethic, as well as to economise: "When he had the means he would buy cheap clothes, cut according to some exaggerated fashion, past or present; when he had none he would gaze at them through shop windows, and regret the few francs that could transform him into a Marsay or a Rubempré" [characters from Balzac].[58] These would be Walter Benjamin's "memory traces" so fruitfully explored by Caroline Evans.[59] It is not dissimilar to more recent concepts of fantasy "in the re-presentation of the past" that might be found in readings of post-modern film, as it exceeds nostalgia, and is not simply re-creation. "Vintage" was fashionable well before our own time and might de-center time, place, and authority. It could be put to uses as different as Jimi Hendrix's wearing of nineteenth-century military uniforms or reinterpreted as Mick Jagger's infamous white "frock dress" (a version of a Greek man's *fustanella* designed by Michael Fish in 1969), which Michael Lankjaer argues placed Jagger in a Byronic and Romanticist tradition.[60] The transformative potential of vintage is captured in two lines from the New Zealand poem "In the Second Hand Clothes Shop" by Elizabeth Smithers: "Lounge lizards and ladies of the night/Have been here and gone off in disguise … ."[61] Rees-Roberts usefully links post 1960s vintage to an "aesthetic space" different from that of "realism and modernism" and to theoretical concepts surrounding representation: "the spatial realm of juxtaposition, heterotopias, and simultaneity" in postwar culture.[62]

Men's clothes, although they had lost the extreme mannerism and patterning of eighteenth-century court dress, retained an elaborate syntax of cut, tonal color, and texture. Tweed trousers for men were popularized after Sir Walter Scott wore what had been a shepherd's check in 1826. Summer fashion for urbane, wealthy men in the late-nineteenth century continued to be light and playful, often white with contrasting playful effects including painted floral waistcoats with designs such as blue hydrangeas, a flower popular within Decadence. Surviving garments include some with a boned construction which shaped the form of the male body.[63]

One consequence of the infamous Oscar Wilde trial of 1895, in which he was jailed for indecency, was that "Wilde … transformed dandyism into a vehicle for a homoerotic presence and a sexualized symbol of the Decadence."[64] Although it could be said that "anxiety" around the topic of men and their clothes heightened, the often-used "anxiety" is rather imprecise. Figures as diverse as the wealthy French connoisseur Boniface, Comte de Castellane (Boni de Castellane) or the American writer Tom Wolfe, clearly enjoyed their dandiacal clothing strategies and deployed them for celebrity purposes in periods as different as the 1920s and the 1970s and 1980s respectively.

Royals, Sport, Fashion, and War

Oscar Wilde was certainly not the only influence on fashions for men at the *fin-de-siècle*. Royalty continued to be of enormous interest and set many sartorial trends. When that great lover of pleasure, Edward VII, visited Marienbad incognito as the Duke of Lancaster, he was followed by tailors from Paris, Budapest, Vienna, and Berlin who photographed him and took notes about his clothes. Edward VII introduced many novelties into men's fashion. For the countryside such as at Sandringham, he permitted an informal dress code. The Henry Poole ledger marked as "HRH 1865" is for an evening coat without tails, the first "dinner jacket." He is also credited with making fashionable the creased trouser in 1909 (his groom dried them with a board weight after heavy rain, resulting in the line), turned-up cuff trouser (after hitching his trouser bottoms at a dirty racing track) and, as his girth grew, undoing the bottom button of his waistcoat. The blazer is supposed to derive from a short garment with gold buttons worn by the crew of HMS Blazer in honour of Queen Victoria.[65] Early-twentieth-century British Labor politicians wore black suits, whereas Tories wore the more formal dress of black frock-coat, which was often worn with contrasting colored or finely striped trousers.[66] World War I shook part of the certainty of these dress codes forever, and in the process men's fashion was remade once again.

Sport and war might seem to be dissonant but many of the garments adapted for wartime use originated in elite sporting traditions. Throughout the last century all manner of garments, styles, and textiles from the riding, shooting, and golfing wardrobes began to be adopted for city and town, infiltrating even aspects of the city suit. Olivier Saillard calls the enormous transition from sportswear to towns-wear the "secularization of sportswear" and a "radicalization of urban dress, viewed through the prism of sports and simplification."[67] The first garment produced by the French horse-riding outfitters Hermès in 1925 was a deerskin, zip-up golf jacket, predating Elsa Schiaparelli's use of the zipper in women's clothes in the 1930s.

The rise of weekends, vacations, and the cult of sport among working people emerged strongly in the United States in the 1910s. The cult of the body upon which part of this was predicated has an older derivation. The Victorians—men and women—liked looking at photographs and paintings of nude men. Many men made a living by showing their bodies to the public; there was no such profession in the previous century. Nineteenth-century commentators argued that city culture debilitated its male youth and they developed a set of formalised body-work rituals in the place of manual labor. Physique magazines were pioneered by the Prussian-born body worker Eugen Sandow, and also functioned as pornographic stimulants. The men often had talcum powder applied to their bodies to make them appear smoother and whiter—just like a marble statue—and this continued in "jock" photos until the 1950s and 1960s. Nude images of Sandow could be found in the plutocrat homes of ladies' boudoirs in Newport, Rhode Island, at the end of the nineteenth century.[68] Sandow even toured Australia in 1905. A whole repertoire of new male professions emerged from this date: the physical athlete, boxer, professional strongman, physical culture instructor, model, and gymnastic instructor. A great many "body culture" periodicals appear from 1890s and on postcards after 1900. The famous Arrow shirt man in the United States, an invention of the illustrator Leyendecker, was called a "hunk of male magnificence" at the time.[69] France held a *concours de beauté plastique de Paris* in the 1920s. American President Woodrow Wilson had a "personal trainer," Abe Boshes, who was also famous for his semi-nude photo shoots around 1915. An Indian man was also celebrated at the time, Professor KV Iyer of Bangalore, famous for his semi-nude photoshoots and his commercial gym. These presented a striking image of the non-white ideal physique body. In contemporary gym culture, a Foucauldian reading sees the way in which "the energy of the fit body becomes not just an instrument, but also a precious sign of the individual's value."[70]

Hybrid forms, clothing innovations and newly developed synthetic fibres created a whole new domain of "casual wear" in the first half of the twentieth century. The jock strap descends from the "bike web" invented by Charles Bennett in Britain in 1874 (riders were called "jockeys").[71] The term "sneaker" was coined in America to describe a croquet shoe with canvas upper and vulcanised rubber sole in 1875. Many clothing innovations emerged from the Olympic Games, first held in 1896. Futurist Thayat (Ernesto Michahelles) developed a one-piece men or boys' sports-suit in 1918 which resembles the later tracksuit, as a radical reworking of men's clothing and which is thought to be the first jumpsuit. German company Schiesser first introduced ribbed cotton underwear for men in the 1920s; they had a fly after WWII. The American company Jockey introduced the Y-front in 1935. The polo shirt came from India and was popularized by the tennis player René Lacoste, whose nickname "Alligator" provided its logo, in a honeycomb piqué weave, with a back longer than the front, from 1933. Golf sweaters from the Shetland Isles were popularized by the youthful celebrity the Prince of Wales. German Olympians popularized the anorak in 1936. US college or varsity wear, printed with symbols, spread the sweatshirt, tracksuit, and windbreaker around the world. Inter-war male wrestlers wore elaborate brocaded dressing gowns between fights; republished by *Vogue Italia* in 2004, such images reinforced the dandiacal offerings of Tom Ford.

More of the body was on show. It is significant that what we call the "frontier countries": Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and West Coast United States (California) developed new body cultures fundamentally linked to sports fashion.[72] Men began to slip down the straps of their bathing costumes, revealing more of the body: in the 1930s, Janzten suits came with "shouldaire strings" that could be removed altogether, and by 1935 Jockey retailed bathing trunks with no straps.[73] Scottish-born, Australian-based (from 1910) knitting-mill chief Alexander MacRae developed the "Speedo" knitted bather, worn by an Olympic champion in 1932. By the early 1960s Australian Peter Travis had designed the "budgie smuggler," a revealing trunk that sat on the hips rather than the waist, and had less drag in the water. Some were designed with co-ordinating shorts and open shirts that were redolent of the new California sports-fashions for men. Items of occupational dress, such as the white singlet in Australia and the black singlet in New Zealand (such sleeveless tops were originally woollen, and later cotton), shifted from their working-class association for sheep shearing and abattoir work to become sporting insignia by the 1920s. North Americans would call them a tank top, and they had earlier, striped counterpoints in nineteenth-century French oarsmen and 1930s Riviera wear. By the 1980s they were appropriated as part of erotic gay male casual attire in both countries when they were made shorter and tighter.[74]

The Crimean War (1835–1836) and the extreme cold of Southern Russia saw the rise of the full beard for men, the cardigan and balaclava for servicemen.[75] Thomas Burberry's gabardine trench coat of 1835 was only for informal, wet weather wear, but became iconic around the world after British soldiers wore a version of it with buckles and no buttons in the trenches of World War I. Burberry's ready-made water-proof coats, pea-jackets, and greatcoats were popularized with Army endorsements for their Naval Weatherproofs; other companies producing such clothes included the well-known brand Acquascutum. Such clothes were popular, Tynan argues, as they married War Office requirements with traditional concepts of country leisure.[76] Knitted socks, mittens, and mufflers were widely worn in the trenches of the Great War. The blouson was also worn first by soldiers, but it relates to the older lumberjack.

The "drab" color khaki (possibly derived from the Hindi/Urdu word for "dust," and indicating a wide range of colors from grey to brown), is meant to derive from a military use in Peshawar, India, in the 1840s, when a British army officer bought up white cloth to make loose uniforms that were then washed in a muddy river to create camouflage.[77] The modernizing British Army moved away from red uniforms and adopted more practical khaki for the Boer War and World War I. The enormous production of uniforms in indicated in this statistic: in March 1916 British Parliament debated the provision of uniforms and declared that the normal provision was 1,900,000 but with the outbreak of war the figure was now 117,090,000.[78] To produce such enormous volume, civilian trades were "enlisted." Officers could have their own tailors make service dress, but regular army men also turned to tailors if they could afford it.

Boxer shorts as underwear (summer infantrymen issue) were introduced to the European mindset by American troops during World War II. Duffle (from the Belgian wool fabric *duffild*) coats were worn at the landing of the Allies in Normandy, June 6, 1944: the Inuit parka was worn by American troops in camouflage green. Khaki-colored clothes were popularized in the United States as "chinos" after they were worn by troops in the Philippines during World War II.

Innovations in fashion and new cultural understandings of masculinity often go hand in hand. For example, the material invention by Dupont of synthetic fibre Lycra (Spandex in the United States, elastane in Europe, invented 1958, widely used by the 1960s–1970s) is coincidental with the theoretical speculation of Roland Barthes, who in 1978 described the effects of gym going as a new "reflected culture of the body."[79] The convergence of sportswear and men's fashion was fruitfully explored in the Italian exhibition and publication *Human Game: Winners and Losers* at the Palazzo Pitti (2006), which connected sport with body or performance art and the work of 1960s–1970s figures such as Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci. This account also indicates the significance of material and technological innovation in sports fashion across the twentieth century in changing both fashion aesthetics and masculine moods. The impact of sports fashions was transformed and amplified to global scale by the rise of Black youth culture in the United States from the 1970s, MTV video in the 1980s, rap music in the 1990s, and the internet in the 2000s. Basketballer Michael Jordan popularized a shaved head and loose shorts. Basketballer Dennis Rodman's bisexual queerness made dyed hair and make-up more visible for men in the mid-1990s.

Works by sociologists such as Ulrich Beck, author of *The Risk Society* (1992), and Frank Furedi, author of *Culture of Fear* (1997), argue that since the 1980s–1990s, the culture of risk management in Western society has super-charged a new culture of risk, in which everything from white-water rafting to extreme sports has engendered new practices and new looks. Adventure fashion brands such as Patagonia, the use of Velcro nylon (invented in Switzerland 1948), Gore-Tex (windproof polymer), the cult of sailing, DayGlo colors (fluorescent pigments made by the United States company)—originally designed for safety for workers—are all evidence of this trend.[80]

Despite the promise of freedom connected with sport and leisure, men's clothing for some is more and more regulated in the west, often by stealth. In the past two decades, many POPS ("privately owned public spaces," managed by landlords and developers) have proliferated. These vary from North American gated communities to enormous shopping centers such as the 42 acres of the United Kingdom's "Liverpool One." Their rise is linked to an increasingly draconian policing of dress. Items of clothing, particularly that worn by youth, are often connected to purported criminality and deviance by security firms, and simply banned. Prohibitions against the "hoodie" were famously imposed at the Bluewater Shopping Centre, Kent (UK) in 2005 and became even more strongly associated with youth criminality during the British urban rioting of 2011.[81] Authorities saw the wearing of such clothes as a mechanism to evade identification or detection. The hoodie, often worn over a baseball cap (another prosthetic frame), not only shrouds the face of the wearer but also obscures the modern conception of dress as expressing individual identity. The word "hoodie" now means both a garment and a wearer. The hood has traditionally functioned as a source of protection from the weather and the elements, and it makes sense that poorer working-class youth might manage their thermo-regulation in that way. The Georgia Supreme Court ignored such clothing functions in 1990, citing a 1949 decision thus:

> public disguise is a particularly effective means of committing crimes … From the beginning of time the mask or hood has been the criminal's dress. It conceals evidence, hinders apprehension, and calms the criminal's inward cowardly fear.[82]

Bubble Up

Collegiate style was embraced with remarkable global speed after World War II. Riveted blue jeans, patented by Levi Strauss in 1873, were widely worn in US colleges and are now one of the most common consumer items in any wardrobe. Yet 200 years ago cotton denim (made with a blue dye from Nîmes, hence "de Nîmes"; denim) was the attire of working men in the French and Flemish countryside. T-shirts are meant to derive from an incident when sleeves were sewn into sailor's undershirts so that Queen Victoria would not see their hairy underarms in 1890.[83] Worn as underwear and frequently displayed in the heat by American troops in World War II, the T-shirt has been recommended in sports-medicine journals as reducing the effects of "four physical factors: 'occlusion, heat, friction, and pressure'."[84] They were then worn for sports. Prominent Japanese businessman and politician Jirō Shirasu (Head of the Board of Trade in the post war period) wore Henry Poole bespoke suits for work but also embraced denim and white T-shirts for casual dress in Japan in the 1950s, looking markedly similar to many men today (figure). The son of an entrepreneur, educated in Cambridge, he is often described as the first prominent Japanese man to wear denim: he drove Bentleys as a student and later a Porsche.[85] A Japanese style icon, in the late 1970s, when he was approaching the age of 80, he modeled for the late Japanese designer, Issey Miyake.

This is the type of twentieth-century clothing style that Ted Polhemus calls "bubble up." He notes that the wearing of black leather "Perfecto" motor biker jackets (such as were made by Schott Brothers NY; in the United Kingdom, they were often called "Bronx" models) was worn as anti-fashion by young rebels and kids on the margins of society; only by the 1970s and 1980s did they become acceptable fashions and were worn by musicians of different genres and persuasion as an indication of "authenticity"—they also looked sexy and outsiderish.[86] The Ramones wore such jackets with too-small T-shirts, jeans ripped at the knees and tennis sneakers, establishing a fashion look that has survived for close to half a century. Rees-Roberts calls this clothing tactic an American "iconography of anti-conformism."[87] The leather jacket arrived in the United States firstly via wartime air force use, then motorcycle police wear: Harvey argues that the jacket worn by Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (1953) is a parody of police wear.[88] The question of male dress and dissidence within mid- to late-twentieth-century culture is a complex one. In the 1950s, New York gender-fluid writer and bohemian activist Diane di Prima mixed with "junkies and jazz musicians … drinking dykes [butch lesbians], thieves, hustlers and confidence men in trench coats, runaways from the suburbs, dancers and musicians."[89] Her assembly wore "Levis and work shirts, made art, smoke dope, dug the new jazz, and spoke a bastardisation of the Black argot."[90]

Battling Consumerism: Punk and Grunge

To many readers, it is punk that most signals an attitude and a dress of deliberate rebellion; indeed, Andrew Bolton claims, "No other countercultural movement has had a greater or more enduring influence upon high fashion."[91] Punk emerged around 1974 and 1975 simultaneously in New York nightclubs and a London boutique; the American punk was more middle class and UK punk more working class in origin. English Punk Rock was an artful confection largely devised by the "Diaghilev of punk," Malcolm McLaren, using the anti-establishment strategies of the French Existentialists and the later Situationists that McLaren learned about in art school and with a Notting Hill group called "King Mob," as well as his meetings with the New York punk Richard Hell who tied his T-shirts together with safety pins. Whether making clothes from the black plastic-like cloth once worn by British rail porters (discovered in a warehouse) or designing T-shirts depicting Queen Elizabeth II with a safety pin through her nose, McClaren aimed to make "the perfect uniform for people" who were "battling the consumerist fashions of the high street."[92] Dysfunction in cities such as London also saw black and new bright-colored garbage bags pile up, fitting material for punk clothing experimentation. Second-hand jackets were sprayed by friends at car-paint shops. Westwood and McLaren's first shop, *Let it Rock*, firstly stocked 1950s vintage pieces such as brothel creeper shoes and drape jackets. The changing name of their business reflected their shift towards more insurrectionary aspects of society: *Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die*; *SEX*; and *Seditionaries*: bondage trousers (based on "lunatic asylum" dress) and S&M corsets; and finally, *Nostalgia of Mud*: hobo and hillbillies dress. It is unusual in fashion history for people to be arrested for wearing particular clothes (women in trousers in nineteenth-century Paris and cross-dressers in Australia wearing women's underwear are examples). None of this went without notice: a man was arrested for wearing the Tom of Finland penis-hanging T-shirt in Piccadilly Circus and charged under an obscure 1824 *Vagrancy Act* for showing an obscene print in a public place. Police subsequently raided the Seditionaries boutique claiming that it was an indecent exhibition. Such clothes were often released strategically by McClaren to promote his band, The Sex Pistols and by 1976 a French music journalist called Westwood and McClaren "couturiers situationnistes."[93] In a strange twist, the plagiarist McLaren later encouraged police investigation of those pirating his and Westwood's early punk clothes.[94] The deliberate unpleasantness of Punk Rock has been valorised as authentic "empowering amateurism" of DIY culture, or representing the voice of the streets, or as music and behavior exploring "the poverty of the everyday," intra-generational hatred, as well as "the politics of boredom."[95] Bolton sees in it "agitprop," nihilism, infantilism and a "state of perpetual adolescence," with frequent use of childhood garments and accessories from the safety pin to infants' tartans and the school tie.[96] Richard Hell states that his punk hairstyle, often said to be based on that of the 1870s poet Arthur Rimbaud (called a "diabolical beauty" by his lover Paul Verlaine), was not derived from an artistic model but simply a conventional short-back and sides that had become untidy.[97] The band New York Dolls knew and wore Westwood clothes: their androgynous look surprised the public. Perennial punk references are found in the very different designs for women and men of Rei Kawakubo, Junya Watanabe, Zandra Rhodes, Issey Miyake, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Katharine Hamnett, Gianni Versace, Stephen Sprouse, Marc Jacobs, Martin Margiela, Jeremy Scott, Gareth Pugh, John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, and Miguel Adrover.

The clothes associated with "grunge" (originally a form of music—Pacific Northwest garage rock and Seattle "Sea-Port Beat" of the 1950s–1960s, later youth music of the 1980s–1990s) entered the popular visual imagination via the albums and music videos of late-1980s bands such as Nirvana and its lead singer, Kurt Cobain, known for wearing lumberjack wool-checked shirts that college students had first appropriated in the 1950s. Jennifer Le Zotte points out that the latter appropriated the DIY and subversion of gender binaries (sometimes called "gender fuck") clothing strategies of groups such as The Cockettes, wearing a "jaded variation of drag," such as dirty hair, flannel shirts, punk accessories, and thrift store dresses with lumber boots, examples of clothing culture akin to 1980s bricolage in post-modern art and design.[98] Designers such as Marc Jacobs began to retail garments that were deliberately distressed, a strategy that Rei Kawakubo had embraced earlier and with a different intent. DIY ethos has its roots in older anti-fashion, pro-health or non-normative modes worn by extraordinary individuals: the Australian-born composer and folklorist Percy Grainger designed with his wife Ella his own incredible suits made from striped bath or terry towelling fabric in the mid-1930s; the suits were worn in private.[99]

Trickling Across: Androgyny and the 1960s

As well as bubbling up, fashion began to trickle across: "men and women could literally and symbolically enter each other's wardrobes and appropriate and experiment … ."[100] The dress worn by the Beatles was directed by their manager Brian Epstein (who was gay) to move their image away from 1950s delinquents towards a 1960s version of cool: neither leather jackets nor jeans, neither smoking nor drinking in public as they did at the outset: rather the high-buttoned skin-tight Beatles suit of 1964 (made by a London tailor who had worked for stars such as Cliff Richard), tight trousers, thin ties, Cuban-heeled boots, and their new, clearly styled Beatle haircut. The cut differed from their earlier, longer Teddy boy look, a new style that they had encountered in Germany, possibly influenced by the Jean Cocteau film *Orpheus* (1950), and therefore of queer derivation, as Gregg remarks.[101] One interviewer remarked: "But your funny hair-cuts aren't natural."[102] The Beatle look has been interpreted as gender-fluid by Gregg, who calls it a model of "erotic perfection," worn in opposition to the dominant North American casual menswear of the "preppy" look.[103] Beatles suits were also influenced by the designs of modernist Pierre Cardin and his Nehru-style jackets. They also stand in a relationship to the dress of the *Incroyables*: the Beatles could hardly sit down in their tight suits. Hardy Amies, late dressmaker to the current Queen, consulted on men's fashion designs for high street chain Hepworth in the 1960s stated: "Fashion today is to be classless in dress. The whole point is to be sexy."[104]

This was also not the pro-leftist gender equality described by Louise Wallenberg for 1960s Sweden and the unisex designs of Sighsten Herrgårdh: it was always clear from appearances that the Beatles were men.[105] All manner of small dandyisms were possible at the time: the 21-year-old Melbourne-London bi-sexual gallerist Sweeney Reed (formerly Tucker) refused in the 1960s to carry a wallet as it disrupted the line of his tight trousers and in turn had his bank notes ironed for his use.[106] The new focus on men's hairstyling also contributed to the demise of men's hatting, which waned considerably in the 1960s: Kennedy wore a top hat to his Inauguration in 1961 but was almost always hatless. As Drake Stutesman remarks, "It was in the 1960s that for the first time since late Antiquity, women and men went bareheaded as a rule, not as an exception."[107] Hatlessness indicates a parallelism in men's and women's clothing since the 1960s which was less common before: unisex clothing for sport and leisure: the caftan and the unitard. Eugenia Paulicelli emphasises that as early as 1952, Italian designers such as Brioni and Angelo Litrico reintroduced bright color into the men's suiting wardrobe: red or purple for morning or evening jackets, even admixtures of blue and green created by the wool maker Cerruti, and the softer tailoring of the Neapolitan suit. She also points out that Italian film and films set in Italy spread the look to wide audiences: *Roman Holiday* was made in 1953.[108] *North by Northwest*, which made the man in the grey flannel suit famous (suits by tailor Quintino of Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles), was released in 1959, at the same time as the extended paper edition of Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. As Steven Cohan argues, the character played by Cary Grant (a well-known dandy in real life) can be interpreted within Goffman's concepts of "sign activity" and "impression management."[109] These attributes highlighted the "absorption of masculinity into consumerism" and "came to personify the corresponding conflation of substance and packaging."[110] In a commentary with roots in both Baudelaire and Simmel, Cohan argues that the "communication skills newly required for success in business" in post war North America "demanded a heightened sensitivity to outer appearances which in turn induced the 'business mind' to see social identity as a persona, or mask'."[111] Orrin E. Klapp wrote in 1962 of the contemporary United States "in our society we do not have, as one might at first suppose, freedom from typing but a choice of type."[112] Nikita Khrushchev was astonished on meeting Nelson Rockefeller in 1959 that "the biggest capitalist in the world … was dressed more or less like other Americans."[113]

The Warhol Effect

Moe Meyer's sparkling anthology *The Politics and Poetics of Camp* (1994) has reworked the lineage Susan Sontag established from the eighteenth-century aristocrat to the nineteenth-centurty aesthete Oscar Wilde to the twentieth-century urban homosexual. The world of artist Andy Warhol in the 1960s-1980s encapsulates much of this ethos. Warhol dictated a daily diary to Pat Hackett for many years for tax purposes from 1972. As well as listing his taxi, bell hop, and dining expenses, the diaries are littered—literally—with reference to the new body politics and dressing of the 1970s and 1980s, as well as contemporary art, artists, photographers, and celebrities, including Victor Hugo, Christopher Makos, Joe and Bobby Dallesandro, and Robert Mapplethorpe. Warhol loved the nightlife. His dairies describe in late 1977 Victor Hugo at Studio 54 wearing punk pants with a hole in them for his penis to hang through. In July 1978, Warhol designed a dress that was made up six upcycled dresses to wear to the fashion designer Halston's party. Barbara Allen came as a man in a jockstrap. At Studio 54 Warhol was surprised to be introduced to beautiful boys that he was told were called "butch"; guys weighing over 170 pounds and looking like a footballer. This is the body type that photographers Bruce Weber and Herb Ritts later captured in a spectacular way, and it is fascinating that Warhol had to struggle to find the words to describe this new body type. Weber has pointed out the influence of the sense of "non time" and post-industrial settings in 1960s New British cinema on his oeuvre.[114] This was a period genuinely excited by the body that was on active, libertine display in the new nightclubs, bars, and sex clubs of metropolitan centers. Warhol documented the emergence of the "clone" at the new New York venue called The Saint, where everybody dressed alike in blue jeans, with no shirts, and mustaches.

Warhol's approach described perfectly what Rees-Roberts has called the "retromania" of the 1960s-1970s, a "'regime of visibility' articulated through the conjunction of design, image and label."[115] Warhol also prefigured contemporary commercial and artistic culture, for example, the branding strategies of menswear label Abercrombie & Fitch, a late-nineteenth-century outdoors-brand, rebranded after 2012, and directed at gay and gay-positive consumers. It used "overt homo-eroticism," shirtless greeters at store doors, hyper-masculine advertising reminiscent of Calvin Klein's designs and advertising in the 1980s, and "hypermediated retail environments" connected to "identity myths" in which the "customer co-creates and sustains the brand itself."[116]

In concluding with these comments on Warhol, we can say that lived fashion culture itself changed approaches to fashion history as much as what was being taught in the universities and published on academic presses. Non-academic sources such as periodical, newspaper and film, TV and music video programming provide both primary sources and valuable propulsion in this field, and the writing was often of a high standard in quality fashion press. Over the past 250 years, men's fashion has demonstrated certain consistent themes and trends. These include the consolidation of a template of dressing in which a suit jacket matched with trousers came to dominate formal dress. There was a strong a focus on class-based and etiquette-appropriate dressing in which accessories such as ties and hats were considered essential wear. Since the 1920s (so, over the past 100 years), there has been a marked emphasis upon sport, leisure dressing, and the cult of the masculine body. In the past 50 years there has been a premium on youth cultures, music-related fashions, and sub-cultural styles. Today a multiplicity of looks for men are possible: at the time of writing there is resurgence of claims that men might wear non-binary clothing in the future. Those who study contemporary fashion experience it for themselves. It is the hope of this piece of writing that some of the ways in which we can reactivate the clothing meanings and possibilities of the past have been demonstrated for our own times.

Notes

1 McNeil and Bellanta, "Letter From the Editors," 325–8.
2 Broadbent, "Fashioning a Colonial Culture," 19–20.
3 Two of these trade cards are known. One is in the National Gallery of Australia; the other, in the collection of the author.
4 Karskens, "Red Coat."
5 Broadbent, "Fashioning a Colonial Culture," 19–20.
6 McNeil, "Despots of Elegance," 235–48.
7 Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, 81.
8 McDowell, *Man of Fashion,* 46.
9 Jones, "George Washington."
10 Butts, "Every Garment Tells a Story," 70–1.
11 Karskens, "Red Coat."
12 Stafford, *Body Criticism,* 204.
13 Stafford, *Body Criticism,* 206.
14 Stafford, *Body Criticism,* 226.

15 The low-grade starch used for hair powder was not in fact generally edible.
16 Amman, *Dandyism,* 186.
17 Amman, *Dandyism*, 169–70.
18 McDowell, *Man of Fashion*, 73.
19 McDowell, *Man of Fashion*, 79.
20 Mansel, “Monarchy.” See also Maxwell, *Patriots*.
21 Levitine, *Dawn of Bohemianism,* 65.
22 Langkjaer, “Rock Military Style.”
23 Mansel, “Monarchy,” 131–2.
24 Rose, *Making*, 61–3.
25 Barbey d’Aurevilly, *Du dandyisme*, 58.
26 Gronow, *Regency Recollections*, 157.
27 Amman, *Dandyism*, 163.
28 Quicherat, *Histoire du Costume,* 618. Author’s translation.
29 Day, *Consumptive Chic*, 83.
30 Gronow, *Regency Recollections*, 105.
31 Gronow, *Regency Recollections*, 169.
32 Gronow, *Regency Recollections*, 186.
33 Gronow, *Regency Recollections*, 186.
34 Harvey, *Men in Black*, 32.
35 Ribeiro, *Clothing Art,* 349.
36 Clarke, “His Natural Life,” 352–3.
37 Stafford, *Body Criticism*, 36.
38 Stafford, *Body Criticism,* 346.
39 Shanks, *Baudelaire: Flesh and Spirit*, 42.
40 Rees-Roberts, “Single Men,” 196.
41 Mansel, “Monarchy,” 127.
42 Aileen Ribeiro, *Clothing Art*, 345; on sobriety 275.
43 Harvey, *Men in Black*, 257.
44 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 39.
45 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 57.
46 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone,* 75.
47 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 77; 79.
48 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 78.
49 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 81
50 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 97.
51 Kemmis, “Men-Poodles,” 13.
52 Bellanta, “Business Fashion,” 190–1.
53 Ribeiro, *Clothing Art*, 346.
54 Amman, *Dandyism*, 166.
55 Stafford, *Body Criticism*, 41.
56 Ribeiro, *Clothing Art*, 352.
57 McNeil, “Emptying.” See also Picard and Wood (eds), *Tourism.*
58 Rothenstein, *Life and Death of Conder*, 51.
59 Rees-Roberts, “Single Men,” 194.
60 Langkjaer, “Case of Misconstrued,” 111–19.
61 Labrum, “Hand Me Downs,” 130.
62 Rees Roberts, “Single Men,” 193.
63 *Man’s Vest* (summer waistcoat), “Carette.”
64 Meyer, *Politics*, 77. On the afterlife of Wildean dress see Janes, *British Dandies.*
65 Engel, *24-Hour*, 56.
66 Harvey, *Men in Black*, 228.
67 Saillard, “Fashion and Sports,” 418–25.
68 Chapman, *Adonis*, no pagination in work.
69 McDowell, *Man of Fashion*, 105.
70 Sassatelli, “Fit Bodies,” 259.
71 Vaccari, “Jock Strap,” 290.

72 Camoletto, "Bodies at the Limit," 487.
73 Daley, "On the Beach," 162.
74 Gibson, "Engaging in Mischief," 206–21.
75 Tynan, *British Army Uniform*, 12.
76 Tynan, *British Army Uniform,* 128.
77 Tynan, *British Army Uniform*, 2.
78 Tynan, *British Army Uniform*, 74.
79 Vaccari, "Bodysuit," 27.
80 Cashmore, "Risk," cited in *Human Game*, 310.
81 Turney, *Fashion Crimes* and Kinney, *Hood.*
82 Simoni, "Who Goes There," 254.
83 Engel, *24 Hour*, 72.
84 Vaccari, "T-shirt," 146.
85 Sherwood, "Jiro Shirasu."
86 Polhemus, "Trickle down, Bubble up," 368.
87 Rees-Roberts, "Single Men," 199.
88 Harvey, *Men in Black*, 244.
89 Brady, "Stay Home, Stay Stoned," 15.
90 Brady, "Stay Home, Stay Stoned," 15.
91 Bolton, *Punk,* 13.
92 Gorman, cited in "Serious Mayhem," 21–2.
93 Savage, "Symbols clashing everywhere," 28.
94 Gorman, cited in "Serious Mayhem," 24.
95 Gorman, cited in "Serious Mayhem," 19.
96 Bolton, *Punk*, 12.
97 Hell, "'Punk' Couture," 19.
98 Le Zotte, "Connoisseurs of Taste," 374–6.
99 Leong (ed), *Man Style*, 90.
100 Paulicelli and Wallenberg, "Introduction," 2.
101 Gregg, "Sanitizing the Beatles," 26.
102 Gregg, "Sanitizing the Beatles," 26.
103 Gregg, "Sanitizing the Beatles," 29.
104 McDowell, *Man of Fashion*, 142.
105 Wallenberg, "Mago's Magic," 188.
106 Harding and Morgan, *Modern Love*, 297.
107 Stutesman, "Rite of Passage," 58.
108 Paulicelli, "Fashion, Film, and Rome," 100.
109 Cohan, "Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit," 52.
110 Cohan, "Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit," 52.
111 Cohan, "Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit," 54.
112 Cohan, "Spy in the Gray Flannel Suit," 56.
113 Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 171.
114 Rees-Roberts, "Single Men," 194.
115 Rees-Roberts, "Single Men," 190.
116 Pierson-Smith and H. Hancock II, "A& F Brand/Story," 412; 416.

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23 The Attractions of Underclothes

Valerie Steele

High Victorian and Edwardian Underwear

No study of the relationship between fashion and eroticism can omit the subject of women's lingerie, a type of clothing whose associations with intimacy, the naked body, and the act of making love have given them an enduring attraction. The fashion historian Anne Buck described the "period, 1890–1914, and particularly between 1900 and 1908" as "the great epoch of underwear."[1] Contemporaries were also of this opinion. In 1898, Octave Uzanne maintained that "The most special characteristic of contemporary dress is the elaboration of undergarments." He was only one many to rhapsodize about "the exquisite, subtle, adorable art … of filmy, beautiful underclothing." And month after month, in *The Lady's Realm*, Mrs. Pritchard elaborated on the theme, "Lingerie is an enthralling subject." Indeed, at one point she enthusiastically—if, perhaps, blasphemously—argued that "The Cult of Chiffon has this in common with the Christian religion—it insists that the invisible is more important than the visible."[2]

Meanwhile, the underclothing of the past was maligned as ugly and unflattering: "Think of the old days, when the bulky flannel petticoat [and] thick long-clothes … were *de rigueur*." The fashion designer, Lucille, likewise dismissed nineteenth-century underwear as consisting solely of "flannel underclothes, woolen stockings, and voluminous petticoats."[3] The manifest inaccuracies and prejudices in this characterization of Victorian underwear have been blithely ignored by most fashion historians, together with the obvious tendency in fashion journalism to promote the current style at the expense of earlier fashions. Designers and publicists also derided past styles in order to exaggerate their own importance in the history of fashion. But this picture of Victorian underwear fit so well into the stereotype of sexual repression, while descriptions of the extravagance of early twentieth-century lingerie fit equally into the popular view of the Edwardian period, that they have been widely accepted as valid.

Yet the Victorians were by no means unaware of the appeal of seductive and luxurious undergarments. For a long time, however, elaborate underclothing tended to be associated with women of easy virtue. Since the courtesan's business was sexual, her use of deliberately seductive underclothing was not surprising.[4] In general, though, public opinion held that, however elaborate and even coquettish outerwear might be, the underwear of the respectable woman should be relatively plain and modest. In 1861, Doctor Daumas, for example, argued that, "The woman's chemise is an object of respect not of censure; it is the white symbol of her modesty, that one must neither touch nor look at too closely."[5]

Ordinary fashion journals and other women's magazines devoted relatively little attention to the subject of underclothing, and illustrations tended to show these items of

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clothing discreetly folded, rather than on the human figure. The majority of examples of underlinen from the mid-Victorian period that have survived—chemises, petticoats, drawers, camisoles, and nightgowns—are white cotton or linen, of varying degrees of fineness and with a gradual but subtle increase of decoration over time. Decoration might include insertions of embroidery or lace, tucks, or *broderie anglaise*. Although they were sometimes quite attractive, these garments seem essentially modest and unassuming.

The great exception was petticoats, which were often more decorative and colorful, because they were often glimpsed. As early as 1858, the American magazine *Home Journal* suggested in the article "The Red Petticoat Connubially Whip-Up-Alive" that the red petticoat had first been used by Queen Victoria "to reawaken the dormant conjugal susceptibility of Prince Albert."[6]

During the 1870s and 1880s, however, women's underclothing developed simultaneously in two contrasting directions—on the one hand, toward a "healthy," "rational" style, epitomized by Doctor Jaeger's woolen garments, and, on the other, toward greater luxury of material and decoration. According to Anne Buck, the introduction of wool and silk "reflected the two different purposes which underwear is acquiring at this time"—permitting greater physical activity and the display of luxury.[7]

The vogue (one is tempted to call it a "cult") for woolen underwear led some fashion historians to characterize the 1880s as a period of "healthy" underwear, in sharp contrast to the "sexy" Edwardian period, when luxurious silk lingerie received tremendous emphasis in the fashion press. This picture, implying a sudden, drastic change, misinterprets the developments of the High Victorian period.[8] For it was during the High Victorian period that the increase in luxury began to be accompanied by the belief that more decorative and seductive underwear was perfectly appropriate for the respectable married woman. When hidden garments became more luxurious, it seems to indicate that more women were dressing attractively for intimate moments and for their own pleasure.

In *L'art de la toilette chez la femme. Bréviaire de la vie élégante*, the French fashion writer Violette argued that

> Underwear [*les 'dessous'*] occupies a very large place in modern elegance. A true Revolution has taken place in this very intimate side of the feminine toilette. In the past, the law that ruled *lingerie* was absolutely unchangeable. Chemises and stockings traversed centuries without undergoing the least Revolution.

But she claimed that this situation recently changed dramatically: Underwear was now as elegant and luxurious as outer clothing—or even more so. To be pretty "is only half of seduction. Luxury has become the indispensable complement of beauty."[9]

Not surprisingly, fashion magazines tended to emphasize the elegance of underwear, more than its potentially seductive qualities. As lates 1902, Mrs. Pritchard stressed repeatedly that "lovely lingerie" did not belong "only to the 'fast'," and that "dainty undergarments ... are not necessarily a sign of depravity." "The most virtuous of us are now allowed to possess pretty undergarments, without being looked upon as suspicious characters." "Ugliness no longer represents virtue," she insisted, adding somewhat disingenuously that "A wish for dainty underwear is generally actuated by a desire for cleanliness."[10]

Yet by this point Mrs. Pritchard also explicitly linked "exquisite lingerie" and sexual satisfaction within marriage. Mrs. Pritchard was not a "typical" Edwardian fashion writer, since she was unusually outspoken about being sexually attractive to one's husband. (Similar advice seems to appear in America about a decade later.) Nevertheless, she was perfectly respectable. For more than a decade, she wrote a monthly column on "The London and Paris Fashions" for the upper-class periodical *The Lady's Realm*, and was later Fashion Editress for *The Daily Telegraph*.

She was most outspoken in her appropriately named book, *The Cult of Chiffon*, in which she blamed failed marriages on the wife's unwillingness to adopt more seductive lingerie and, by implication, a more seductive attitude toward her husband: "Can one wonder that marriage is so often a failure, and that the English husband of such a class of women goes where he can admire the petticoat of aspirations?" Mrs. Pritchard advised "the irreconcilables among my married friends not to shriek loudly with the company of disappointed spinsters … but to try … the expedient of a much-befrilled petticoat or some illusions in *robes de nuit*." She was aware that such advice might appear "coarse and unpleasant," but she asked her readers to consider "the pathetic side of the matrimonial life of many of your intimate friends." If a couple were unhappily married, would it not be worthwhile for the wife to attempt to charm her husband with "pretty arts and subtleties," rather than leaving such attractions "to a class of women less favored than ourselves"? A woman might be "the most virtuous and careful of wives," but if she were "without mystery and without coquetry," she would be "far from attractive to the ordinary man."[11]

La Vie Parisienne

The desirable eroticism of lingerie was recognized some two decades earlier by writers and illustrators for *La Vie Parisienne*. In the 1860s and early 1870s, the focus tended to be on outerwear (theatre dress, ball gowns, coiffures), but in the course of the 1870s and increasingly in the 1880s, the emphasis shifted to lingerie and *déshabillé*. Thus in the story, "The Wedding Presents," the bride's nightgowns introduced themselves as "fine nightgowns of batiste with lace insertions, [and with] a large monogram embroidered on the heart." According to "the voice of good," "They will scarcely veil with their pearly transparency your rosy and plump body. Your husband will prefer them to the most sumptuous toilettes and your mirror will tell you that [this style] is … what suits you best." Both the wife's economic dependence on her husband and her sexual power over him were indicated next: "It is when you are dressed in them that you will confess the little debts and the large bills. … The transparent nightgown is for the woman what the robe is for the lawyer." Her role is presented as a sexual one—as a kind of married mistress, not a housekeeper or mother.

"The voice of evil," on the other hand, warned that sexual relations in marriage were a legal obligation for a wife, and therefore not a pleasure: "You will dread the instant of putting on these too diaphanous nightgowns, because they call to mind the favorable moment for the lover … an hour perhaps charming for a lover free to escape … but hateful to the one for whom the law imposes it." He implied that a woman obliged to submit to her husband has little chance of manipulating him financially: "And you can acknowledge some bills … . This scanty costume will not at all prevent your husband from telling you '*Zut*' [No way!]." But existing examples of nightgowns from this period scarcely bear out these descriptions. They remained fairly voluminous and concealing, but presumably the relatively lighter fabrics were perceived as revealing. Both the lace insertions and the monogram were typical of better-quality underclothing of the period.

When attempting to elucidate the erotic qualities of garments from the past, the historian must try to see the clothing as it was seen then. Viewed only from the modern perspective, it is difficult to see anything remotely erotic about High Victorian (or even Edwardian) nightgowns. Much of their appeal stemmed from their role as clothing for bed—and thus, by implication, for making love.

Every item of lingerie could arouse the husband's desire for his bride. When the woman wears here crepe de chine peignoir, her husband will give her "a quantity of kisses on the less well defended places." More intimate garments inspired even greater enthusiasm. *Les pantalons*, "decorated with lace and bows of white watered silk" were

> dainty and pretty tight … showing the shape of your round thighs and half veiling with their lace your fine, straight knees … Your husband will watch you going and coming in the bedroom, smart and coquettish. … This will be the moment of hoydenish caresses and of crazy pursuits full of charm.

"How pretty are these cloudy petticoats," murmured "the voice of good":

> You will never be more seductive than when enveloped in their vapor. Your husband, always amorous, would like to put them on you himself, to see you in the form of a 'little dancer,' [in] a corset of white satin and multiple transparent skirts, from which your legs will emerge, rosy under their stockings. … He will tell you again that there is nothing comparable to you at the Opera … or in Eden!

The image of the husband dressing his wife seems less surprising than his open comparison of her with the dancers at the Opera. "The voice of evil" ignores any possible impropriety, arguing only that "Your luxury of petticoats will shock your husband!"[12] But luxury was part of their appeal.

La Vie Parisienne insisted that "The absolutely elegant *pantalon* in good taste" was "simplicity itself"—but it "can easily cost 20 louis." Certain fabrics, such as linen, nansouk, or "fine percale" were good, but silk, surah, and chiffon were still less than respectable. Lace, embroidery, pleats, and ribbons were good when applied with discretion (and when the lace was expensive and real)—a petticoat should give "a cloudy effect when the dress is raised"—but overly "frothy" trim or "a large ruff of lace" was tasteless.

The elegant undergarment was "always white," but someone's mistress might wear, say, "the Irresistible" *pantalon* in "flesh-colored batiste" with "rose-colored bows," or "Provocation" in "peach-flower surah." For "high fantasy," drawers might be colored "in nymph's thigh, or blue Danube, or blue Nile, or sickly heliotrope"—but these were really only suitable for the *cocotte* or the *bourgeoise parvenue*. Again, degrees of eroticism and class distinctions are inextricable mixed. Indeed, one puff described "beautiful lingerie" as "aristocratic lingerie."[13]

Other writers of *La Vie Parisienne* were not always so careful to distinguish between simple and elegant underclothes and those of "fantasy." A puff for "intimate lingerie" from the Maison Berte, for example, used sexual imagery to describe

> the conjugal chemise in Oriental silk or batiste, all shivering with lace, with great tracks of insertions … transparent crossroads to good places … Its indiscretions would shock the young girl radiant with seraphic beauty, flower turning into fruit.

Similarly "the *pantalon cherubin*" was described as being "clasped at the knee by a ribbon under which quivers a long flounce of lace," and the flannel night gown with its *jabot* of lace (which sounds modest enough) is called "the *combat* nightgown."[14]

It is somewhat risky, of course, to rely on *La Vie Parisienne* for accurate descriptions of what married women really wore, since the magazine was directed to the man-about-town, and catered to his erotic fantasies. Some figures are fantastic, and perhaps represent neither wife nor mistress: "The great priestess" seemed to represent the sexual ideal. She wore a "*décolleté* nightgown in black satin … decorated with Mechlin lace (a type that resists more …)." Perhaps the implication is that other sorts of lace might rip under the strain of sexual intercourse. Most strikingly, this imaginary nightgown is open all down the front: "A true sacerdotal garment. But how to close this jewel-case? No one has ever spoken of that." The nightgown as jewel-case could be interpreted as symbolizing the vagina, as well as implying that the body was a jewel.

Accounts of foreign women often reflected contemporary fantasies about exotic feminine types. The Oriental woman (here, as usual, Middle Eastern or Turkish) was described as spending her days "naked or nearly so"—but at night she covered with rich fabrics and furs. The woman of the Sudan was virtually naked, but for the jewelry and slippers. Even other Europeans could be shown as being so uninhibited as to dispense with all night-time apparel: "In Italy.—A fig for nightgowns or any other covering! Has she not the mosquito-net crowning the … bed like the sail of a schooner? Ah! The mosquitos aren't bored!"[15]

Although nightgowns and lingerie could be erotic, the appeal of the naked body also exerted a strong influence. During the 1890s, when censorship in France was further relaxed, more nudes appeared in *La Vie Parisienne*. To some extent, the magazine's emphasis on lingerie in the 1880s may have represented the closest thing to nudity that the law permitted. Nevertheless, there are also indications that the partially clad female figure was often perceived as *more* erotic than the nude.

The Case of Underpants

Women's underpants (known in England as "drawers" and by the 1880s also as "knickers," and in France as *le caleçon*, *le culotte*, *les pantalons*, and *le pantalon féminin*) were only slowly accepted in the course of the nineteenth century, in the face of long and powerful resistance. They were widely perceived as a "demi-masculine" article of dress, and in the early part of the century were worn primarily by some courtesans, actresses, and dancers. Long underpants were then adopted by little girls, and as an infantile mode spread from England to France, to be gradually adopted by respectable women for sporting pursuits, such as horseback riding, and for active dances, such as the polka and the waltz. But as late as 1873, *Le Sport* argued that while it might be "necessary" for certain pursuits, "it is never gracious … . *Le pantalon*, in a word, is a man's article of clothing … and because of that, women who have the true intuition of elegance of their sex will always abstain from it."[16]

The development of the swaying crinoline-cage in mid-century may have led to a more general acceptance of feminine underpants, as the immodesty of female trousers began to be outweighed by the danger of being without them. *L'inexpressible* became termed *l'indispensable*. (Although drawers were open up the inside of the legs, a yard or so of chemise was tucked into the drawers, thus shielding the thighs from view.) Doctors also argued that reasons of hygiene (such as the dangers of cold and germs) necessitated the use of drawers, in addition to the chemise and petticoat(s).[17]

As the issue of its indecency faded, it became fashionable and "absolutely modern" to wear drawers. Increasingly, however, drawers were adopted by women of the middle and working classes, from whom the fashionable sought to distinguish themselves. A degree of eroticism was reintroduced to the garment in conjunction with greater elegance of material. Thus Violette maintained that "our *pantalons* of silk, clasped at the knee by a ribbon above a wreath of frothy lace, have lost all resemblance with those *pantalons* made of percale and covering the leg as far as the ankles—very decent, but hideously ugly and bourgeois."[18]

Part of the perceived "ugliness" of the old style of drawers apparently derived from their very decency and modesty, their concealment of the leg. Were the new, fashionable drawers intended to be at least slightly indecent? This perspective appears in the 1887 novel *L'Adorée* by René Maizeroy: "So light, so brief, with cascades of Valenciennes lace and frills of ribbons, these *pantalons* which do not descend beyond the lace garters ... drive a lover crazy better than the immodest state of nudity."[19]

There were dissenters, however, or at least those who pretended to prefer the state of affairs prior to the widespread acceptance of drawers. An article of 1890, "De l'Adultère; conseils pratiques" in the magazine *Gil Blas* presented a negative picture of drawers—from the point of view of an old voyeur:

> ... in my youth, under the Empire, women did not wear drawers ... [and] our imagination climbed the length of their stockings and seduced us into ecstasies toward those regions as intimate as they are delicious. We did not see, but we knew that we could see, should the occasion arise ... . But today ... we know that there our view would be irremediably arrested by an obstacle, that our suggestive voyage would end at a hollow of batiste and we come to a stop at the base of the wall.[20]

If the opportunity for the sight of women's sexual organs had decreased, nevertheless a voyeurism directed toward the sight of the underpants themselves to some extent replaced it. Much of the appeal of dances like the *can can* and the *chahut* derived from the intentional exhibition of the dancers' underpants. Numerous erotic postcards from the 1890s and the early twentieth century showed women exposing their elaborate underpants that made the derriere appear to be enormously expanded. In *My Apprenticeships*, Colette described Willy's apartment as "strewn" with postcards "celebrating the attractions of underclothes ... ribboned drawers, and buttocks."[21]

Modern Society: The Fantasy and "Fetishism" of Underwear

Even the earliest "fetishist" correspondence paid some attention to the subject of underwear. A few *EDM* correspondents, for example, advocated women wearing visible underpants, like those of little girls. By the early 1890s, the correspondence in journals such as *Modern Society* emphasized not only tight-lacing, but also such subjects as the "delicious swish and entrancing rustle" of the silk petticoat. Accounts of "dainty underwear" described "the very thinnest and filmiest" garments, nightgowns in "a king of silk gauze—so filmy that they can only be worn once," chemises in "coloured gauze," each with a matching "frou-frou jupe." Even *La Vie Parisienne* would have disputed that such garments were worn by "French *grandes dames*." One French woman, for example, was described as wearing "black stockings, black satin drawers trimmed with ecru lace, a black silk chemise ... yellow satin stays, trimmed with black lace, and yellow garters":

"Tout cela c'est pour mon mari, qui adore les peaux blanches!" Another suggestion was to wear crimson drawers and a matching chemise with black stays.[22]

Like the corset correspondents, underwear enthusiasts argued that the modern man resisted marriage, "putting his attentions in quarters where the question of intentions is never raised"; so it was necessary to use erotic lingerie to "pique" his imagination. Alternatively, he might be most attracted by the "diaphanous and cobwebby lace petticoat" *itself*—going to the extent of stealing it from the "high kicking dancer." In reality, such erotic lingerie was still probably mostly worn by courtesans: for example, an "amber silk" chemise was called "the Liane de Pougy chemise."[23]

In other respects, however, this correspondence apparently reflected more specialized erotic interests. Thus, although the "rustle" of the "frou frouing" petticoat was cited by later fashion journalists, here is seemed to form part of a king of fabric fetishism. Satin, for example, exerted a "fascination" that was related to its texture ("fine," "stiff," "soft"), the "nice noise" it made ("a vague creaking sound"), and its sado-masochistic associations ("satin skin" cried out to be caned), and sometimes transvestism and theft. In a turn-of-the-century medical account, one kleptomaniac reported, "When I can grab some silk, then I am just as if I were drunk. I tremble, although not from fear. ... I can only think of one thing, to go into a corner where I can rustle it at my ease, which gives me voluptuous sensations even stronger than those I feel with the father of my children."[24] Can such a woman be considered a fetishist, or is this phenomenon a product of the development of the department store, with its peculiarly seductive atmosphere?

The most important point, though, is that these descriptions of lingerie look ahead to those printed in more orthodox fashion journals of the early twentieth century, when color and silk had become more widely accepted. The budding popular interest in erotic lingerie spread throughout society, and may even have influenced sexual fantasies. The corset began to be less important in its own right than as an element of seductive lingerie.

The Iconography of the Corset Advertisement

What was it that *women* wanted for themselves from lingerie and corsets? Although much of the literature on fashion was prescriptive and moralistic (and the literature on corsetry was particularly combative and polarized), advertisements were designed to appeal to the consumer's perceived *desires*, whether or not these conflicted with prescribed behavior. An examination of corset advertisements indicates that the vast majority were directed toward women who were neither dress reformers nor thigh-lacers.

Of course, not even children believe all the promises made by advertisers. But even if we assume a degree of exaggeration and outright duplicity, as well as attempts to *create* consumer desires, nevertheless, corset names, images, and product descriptions tell us what manufacturers thought would appeal to women; and they may also provide a clue to the self-images and fantasies of the corsets' wearers.[25] Advertisements also provide an indication of the changing shape of the corset and the ideal torso, as well as the degree of body exposure and erotic imagery permissible in periodicals at any given date.

Trade names of corsets tend to fall readily into thematic groups. Many corset names, such as The Rival Corset ("perfect shape") and Thomson's La Fiancée, promised physical beauty and success in marital competition. The Kyoto Costume Institute has an example of La Fiancée (circa 1884) that is made of cherry pink silk satin with black decorative stitching.

The name "Swanbill" and the logo of a swan gliding past waterplants were probably intended to conjure up the image of a gently curving figure. One Swanbill advertisement shows a bride and a baby, perhaps suggesting that the corset would help a woman win a husband, without injuring their child. Another popular model was Thomson's Glove-Fitting Corset, the name indicating a trim and perfect fit. The sexual symbol of the swan and the glove are obvious.

One much heralded feature of corset design (evident in the Swanbill advertisement) was the development of slightly different styles of corsets for different figure types—the "stout," the "slim," the "full," the "graceful"—a development that did not necessarily indicate a greater acceptance of alternatives to the "ideal" figure. If anything, the reverse seems more likely, as the various corsets were apparently intended to make their wearers seem to approximate one particular figure type. The Ideal and The Configurateur Corsets, for example, were both designed to "transform" a "thin bust," by lacing padded "regulators" inside the breast gores. Others, such as The Bon Ton Corset and Dr. Warner's Patent Flexible Hip Corset, had "self-adjusting or laced hips" that could also be "regulated at the desire of the wearer." The Empress Corset was "extra long" and "clasps the hips tightly."

Corsets that were possibly intended for would-be tight-lacers are Giraud's Small Waist Corset (sizes 15 to 23) for "exceptional figures," The Willowaist Corset, The Ringwaist Corset, and The Princess Wasp Waist (the last by Madame Dowding, who also produced a corset called The Little Black Cat, as well as a number of corsets for men). These were in the minority, however. The only popular corset with such associations was Thomson's Glove-Fitting Corset, which was recommended in *EDM* and *The Corset and the Crinoline*.

More commonly, beauty, rather than a small waist per se, was emphasized: The Enchantress, The May Queen, The Mignon, The Perfection, The Statuesque, L'Irrésistible, La Délice, Le Svelte, The Serpentine, The Radiant. Corset names evoked images of mythical or even divine beauty, among them CP à la Sirène (after the dangerous water-spirits), Le Corset Diane (named after the virginal moon goddess Diana and billed as fulfilling "The dream of pretty Parisiennes"), and the The IC Persephone Corset (after the fertility goddess).

The range of names seems to have expanded in the early twentieth century. Many evoked figures from mythology, history, and historical legend: Le Corset Déesse, The Venus Corset, The Diana, The Leda ("Queen of Corsets" and, of course, Jupiter's lover, whom he took after assuming the form of a swan), The Cleopatra, The Sappho, La Samothrace, La Sylphide, The Portia, The Ninon, and Le Corset Marie Antoinette.

Two corsets that probably referred to famous women of the day were The Corset Liane (after the courtesan Liane de Pougy) and The Rejane (after the actress). By the early twentieth century, acting was perceived less as a scandalous profession, and more as an exciting one. Thus the boringly named H. S. Corsets were advertised in *Myra's Journal* (January, 1901) with the recommendation that "Among Actresses these beautiful Corsets are held in high favour … . Testimonials from all the Leading London Actresses, the Elite, and the Medical Profession." Some corsets carried ordinary female names such as Jessica, Lilian, and Stella, but others had a distinctly exotic sound: Idilia, Batyra, and Minuska.

Many corset names were romantic, such as L'Aimée, Le Rêve, and L'Apparition. Some in this category were named for jewels, such as The Sapphire, or compared to jewels, as when The Specialité Corset was "likened to that Gem of Gems, the Diamond." L'Écrin was a suggestive name, since in dream symbolism a jewelbox is thought to refer to the vagina. Flower names such as The Columbine and The Asphodel were feminine, while The Grand Calyx Corset of Madame Guillot, "creator of mystery," implied more specifically that the woman was a flower within the corset. The Papillon Corset was also romantic, but some names present a surprising contrast to this theme: there was also La Militaire and Le Corset à la Victoire. The Oracle Corset hinted at a mysterious (but presumably happy) future—and was specifically associated with "the pretty Mantle sisters" at the Opera and with "Madame la Comtesse d'H-, née de B--, known for having the prettiest waist in Paris."

Corset names also evoked status—The Princess, La Châtelaine, The Lady Vivian, The Prima Donna, The Duchess Corset and Thomson's Empress Corset. The box top for the ABC Empress Queen Corset showed a picture of Queen Victoria, perhaps indicating fantasies of power and patriotism rather than sex appeal. On the other hand, it was thought by some that "The possession of a slender waist is a question of race,"[26] so that corsets with "aristocratic" names might also implicitly have promised a "refined" figure.

Some corset names emphasized chic—such as The Bon Ton Corset, or indeed, in English-speaking countries, any corset with a French name. The International Corset presumably had cosmopolitan connotations while the Corset of the Future was undoubtedly supposed to be ultrafashionable. Other names referred to a specific type of corset, such as Le Corset Louis XV, and the supposedly "classical" (i.e., quasi-Empire) Ceinture Athenienne. Could The Sunflower Corset have been intended for Aesthetes?

Illustrations also formed an important component of corset advertisements. Prior to the mid-1880s, most advertisements did not portray the corseted female figure, but rather only an illustration of the corset itself, sometimes accompanied by a picture of a clothed female figure. It seems likely that publishers were reluctant to print "indecent" illustrations of women in their underwear. (There were, however, some fashion plates that showed corsets being worn.) By the 1880s and early 1890s, it became more acceptable to show women wearing corsets. The half-length female figure in a corset, while remaining popular into the twentieth century, seems to have formed the link between the earlier illustrations of an isolated corset and those that showed the full-length corseted figure. At first rather sketchy and small in case, these illustrations became more detailed and elaborate. By the turn of the century, they were often fairly erotic genre scenes of one or more women in a state of undress in boudoirs or bedrooms, engaged in a variety of activities—such as looking in a mirror, sleeping on a sofa, being laced up by a maid, and so on. This development probably did not go unprotested. In the 1890s, the National Vigilance Association (a prominent English social purity organization) attempted to censor theatre posters and "corset and lingerie displays" of which it disapproved. Certain corset advertisements in America were also censored.[27]

There is sometimes a note of voyeurism in the portrayal of semi-clad women in an intimate setting. This appears quite clearly in an American corset card of the mid-1880s: "THE SECRET OUT AT LAST—WHY *MRS. BROWN* HAS SUCH A *PERFECT* FIGURE," which shows a woman peeking through a key-hole into Mrs. Brown's bedroom. Mrs. Brown stands in her corset, looking at herself in a mirror. This voyeurism focused on self-admiration or on the image of one or more clothed or corseted women (never men) looking at a woman friend in her new corset.

Illustrations sometimes portrayed the woman in conjunction with some suitably appealing familiars, such as kittens or cupids. The woman herself could be transformed into a fantasy image, such as a mermaid in a striped corset, rising from the sea. Some illustrations imply a romantic story, such as the reception of a love letter. One especially erotic corset advertisement appeared in 1901 in *The Gentlewoman*, showing a beautiful sleeping woman on a sofa. Her lacy peignoir is open, revealing her corseted torso above a smooth petticoat ending in a mass of frills. The caption reads: "THE SPECIALITÉ CORSET IS A DREAM OF COMFORT."

While illustrations and corset names often appealed subliminally to women's fantasies and desires, the accompanying text focused on issues of conscious concern to women. Descriptions generally included claims of quality and novelty, and information on available materials, colors, shapes, prices, and (sometimes) sizes. Almost always touted were improved and elegant appearance produced by the corset, and its support and comfortable fit. Durability, stylishness, and patented improvements referring either to corset construction or the correction of particular figure problems were also often cited. Toward the end of the century, the attractive appearance of the corset as an item of lingerie was increasingly stressed.

It seems that what women wanted most from a corset was "A perfect figure guaranteed with ease" (circa 1881). They wanted "Corsets that male my figure so much admired" (1885)—not so much a *very* small-waisted figure, as an "elegant" figure on which a fashionable dress would fit well, since "The object of dress is … to display to the best advantage the female form divine" (1884).

Different corsets were desirable for different occasions. For morning at home, for summer, for sport and for wearing beneath a tea-gown, a woman wanted a short and lightly boned corset or corselet permitting "perfect ease and comfort," flexibility, and support for the bust; for daytime, an elegant design; and for evening, a low-cut, well-boned, and especially stylish corset—one that was chic in design and made of beautiful material, perhaps matching her petticoat.

In general, although "uncomfortable and troublesome" corsets were condemned, the vast majority of advertisements focused primarily on appearance. There were relatively few advertisements for corded (rather than boned) corsets or for other "healthy" corsets, such as those made of wool or "cellular" material, or those with shoulder straps. Some women (and men) with health problems—such as "nervous exhaustion," "Brain Fag," gout, "female irregularities," lumbago, hysteria, and consumption—did have recourse to "the marvellous health-giving properties" of the "Electric Corset" (1880s through 1905). These extensive claims may be a response to the equally sweeping indictments of the corset. Many of the same illnesses are cited. Nevertheless, although most women apparently ignored the attacks on the corset, a number of advertisers believed that many women wanted a "hygienic" corset—as long as it was also seductive and elegant.

Indeed, *the* fashionable corset of the early twentieth century was intended to be a "hygienic corset." A French corsetiere with a degree in medicine, Madame Inez Gâches-Sarraute, designed the new corset with a straight busk, because she believed the busk that curved inward at the waist was unhealthy. The inward pressure at the waist "forced the organs downward," whereas her straight-fronted corset would support the abdomen and "add to the effects of nature." Furthermore, her corset, being lower on top, would not suppress the bust.[28] In theory, it might have been a better design, but when laced even moderately tightly, it produced if anything a *more* "distorted" figure, known as the S-bend, with the stomach pushed back, the breasts thrown forward, and the back arched. Yet the straight-fronted corset seems to have been adopted quite rapidly:

> There is in Paris a new corset, which is the rage. … The new straight-fronted corset … is likely to create a new style of waist and figure entirely, and it is in every way, a more hygienic and healthy garment than any of the old-fashioned stays. … The waist is not nearly so small as formerly, a much more important point in the figure now being the

> long, straight-sloping line in the front. The new cut of corset, of course, drops the bust, and to attain that curved look so essential to a good figure it is necessary for thin women to have a ruching or even two ruchings of ribbon put inside the new, low-busted corset.[29]

The focus of the figure begins to shift from the waist to the bosom.

The Eroticism of Lingerie

The intimate quality of lingerie is a valued erotic consideration. It lies next to the skin, and is only seen by the wearer and the lover. Octave Uzanne compared the woman lingerie to "a tinted flower, whose innumerable petals become more and more beautiful and delicate as you reach the sweet depths of the innermost petals. She is like a rare orchid, who surrenders the fragrance of her mysteries only in the intimacies of love." And Emile Zola described at length the lingerie on display at a department store, that looked "as if a group of pretty girls had undressed, piece by piece, down to the satin nudity of their skin."[30]

Mrs. Pritchard, of course, believed that attractive negligée garments "are a pretty compliment to your husband." And at least some Victorian brides agreed. When the Englishwoman Ellen Peel married in 1890, her uncle gave her £100 for a wedding present, and she recorded in her diary that she spent £90 on *under* linen, but it is lovely, nightgowns especially, I hope *he* will like them." Lady Naomi Mitchison also recalled buying her trousseau during the First World War, and leaving the store in tears when her mother and the saleswoman began to comment on her nightgowns.[31]

Marguerite d'Aincourt, author of *Études sur le costume féminin* (1883), assumed that the bride would initially be too modest and shy to wear seductive lingerie and *déshabillé*; but that they should still be part of her trousseau, because she would come to appreciate them, just as, implicitly, she would come to enjoy sex:

> Do not describe [the conjugal chemise] to young girls; one should respect the exquisite and a little inordinate modesty of these seraphims, but have it placed in their bridal trousseau. They will not wear it at first, but after some time, they will understand the value of this Orient silk or batiste ... [with] insertions of lace, all quivering with the Valenciennes which decorates it in flounces at the hem. They will get used to this transparent web, which, in front – from the start of the throat to the waist – reveals the charming graces of a young and supple bust.[32]

In Elinor Glyn's racy novel, *The Vicissitudes of Evangeline* (1905), the character Mary Mackintosh is shocked by Evangeline's Doucet nightgown, which is described as being virtually see-through and cut low in the neck: "I consider this garment not in any way fit for a girl—or for any good woman, for that matter." When Evangeline points out that it is very becoming, she replies, indignantly, "But no nice-minded woman wants to look becoming in bed!"[33] Glyn, though, presents Mackintosh as a ridiculous prude, a view that she presumably expected her readers to share. More unrealistic is her portrayal of the unmarried but independent Evangeline in such a nightgown. For most women, lovely lingerie came, if it came at all, as part of the erotic initiation of marriage.

In early twentieth-century France, the authors of books and articles on beauty and dress were sometimes surprisingly insistent about the erotic qualities of lingerie and its role in lovemaking. In *Tous les secrets de la femme* (1907), the Baronne d'Orchamps maintained that "Nothing equals the voluptuous power of feminine underwear [*les dessous*]." It plays a crucial role in the continued seduction of the husband: "At the apparition of these veils," an "ineluctable rapture … comes over the masculine brain." Their "vaporous ingenuity and involved style add to the mysterious and tempting power of the desired treasures in proportion that the woman feigns to protect and distance them."[34]

Similarly, in *Le Bréviaire de la femme* (1903), the Comtesse de Tramar argued that the very difficulty of "the dismantling of the fortress," by "exasperating anticipations," functioned "to convince the mortal of the supreme favor that he is going to receive." The act of slowly undressing marked "the amorous stations of desire." Yet, she believed, many women were still afraid that they would be "compromised if they began to appear in those *déshabillés* that seemed to be reserved only for those whose profession is to seduce." Tramar insisted, though, that "The husband has the right to see pretty things"—"elegant and gay" lingerie was at least as important as "good silver" or "a well decorated house" with a "pretty nuptial chamber." In other words, the wife should be not only a homemaker, but also a lover. As a good lover, she should know that fine underwear was of "essential importance":

> It is the veiled, secret part, the desired indiscretion conjured up; the man in love expects silky thrills, caresses of satin, charming rustles, and is disappointed by an unshapely mass of rigid lingerie. … It is a disaster![35]

This type of advice, taken together with the fact that by the Edwardian period lingerie had become both increasingly luxurious and a focus of journalistic interest, lends support to the idea that people were becoming more open about their sexuality. Materials that had been *risqué* in the 1880s became increasingly acceptable over the next decades, and fine Edwardian lingerie was made of "all the downy and delicate fabrics of *frou-froutage*." The poem "Frou-Frou" in *The Lady's Realm* exemplified the related emphasis on auditory eroticism: "The very rustle of her gown as she goes by I love to hear … I wait your coming 'Frou-Frou—Frou-Frou.'"[36]

Even color became more acceptable, although there were still those who argued that "Color, in the secret clothing of women, is an entirely modern taste, deriving no doubt from the nervousness that torments our imagination, from the dulling of our sensations, from that unceasingly unsatisfied desire that causes us to suffer … and that we apply to all manifestations of our feverish life."[37] It all sounds rather ominous, and if colored underwear were at all widely perceived as an expression of a decadent and neurasthenic craving, it is not surprising that some fashion journalists advised their readers to choose white. Even *La Vie Parisienne* had warned that men who liked black underwear "need to see white skin emerging from black sheath, because white skin in itself hardly arouses [them] any more"—and women were advised that white underwear sufficed for the virile man.[38]

In addition to being an element of seduction, "elegant underclothes" were also a source of "personal satisfaction" for the woman herself. "This paradise of fine and soft lingerie … this warm and luxurious temple that shakes at our least shiver; this little fortune that the elegant woman hides under her dress" serve "to tranquilize" her. "This consciousness of our femininity" only develops "when, in all disinterestedness, for ourselves alone … we have obtained from the lightly touching and delicate underclothes" certain sensations "for our skin"—"the discreet lightness of breath and the penetrating savor of the caress."

Here D'Orchamps anthropomorphizes the lingerie; it produces tactile sensations akin to those of a lover, and responds to the body it envelops:

> In its silky thrill, this luminous and glittering froth overflows from beneath the prudish, enveloping exterior clothing—does it not appear as if animated by the warmth and clandestine caresses that it ceaselessly exchanges with the palpitating silhouette within?[39]

Sensations of softness and warmth and of silky materials gently rubbing against the skin, an intimate connection with the body, a combination of secrecy and visual effect, and a justifiable sense of luxury—a "little fortune"—were all components of lingerie that contributed to reinforcing a sense of femininity.

Fashion historians have referred to the "body-clothes unit," but d'Orchamps distinguished sharply between underwear, which has a close connection with the body and "shakes at our least shiver," and exterior clothing that is "prudish" and "enveloping." Some contemporaries, indeed, suggested that "The beauty and elegance of the 'underneath' developed in logical proportion" to the "severity and simplicity" of the increasingly popular "English tailor-made style." If the tailor-made was somewhat austerely elegant, luxurious lingerie was overtly feminine. Then, too, although the tailor-made could be an expensively understated garment, characterized "elegance of cut," it had also been widely copied, "producing a leveling effect on the exterior clothing." Lovely lingerie reasserted both femininity and status.[40]

If the intimate quality of underwear was itself a valued erotic consideration, such garments were also partially revealed in less intimate situations. "Without knowing it perhaps, assuredly without wanting it—never confess it!—we have all, one day or another, benefited" from the effect of the sight of a petticoat, produced when "the sudden overflowing of the indiscreet flood ... of our silky muslins" was glimpsed "under the lifting of the skirt": it had a "stupefying effect on the imagination of the adored master." Part of the appeal of this flood of petticoats derived from their being hidden under a "quite simple, quite modest dress."[41]

That petticoats were in fact designed to be exhibited and heard is clear from the lively interest and detailed descriptions offered by fashion journalists and novelists. Like teagowns (which also became a "mania" in the early twentieth century), petticoats hovered on the borderline between secret clothing and fashionable dress. Corsets, although hidden, became increasingly elegant—made of silk in "a prism of delicious colors," embroidered with flowers, and often matching the elaborately decorated petticoat. Indeed, it was this elegance of lingerie and corsetry that seems to have appealed most to women. Who could have resisted a petticoat of "pale blue satin ... painted with bunches of violets and cut with a curved edge ... below which falls a shaped flounce of coffee-coloured lace, mounted on a blue silk flounce," or a corset of "beautiful brocade in a Louis Seize design of violets and ribbons on a ground of palest pink and blue shot cream"? And these were by no means the most extravagant creations of the time.[42]

If the austerity of mid-Victorian lingerie indicated not a dislike of sexuality, but an attitude of relative reserve toward its expression, the growing acceptance of erotic and luxurious lingerie and *déshabillé* seemed to indicate a greater willingness to celebrate erotic beauty and marital sexuality. The expansion of colors, materials, and decorations in underwear was paralleled by a growing acceptance of artificial beauty aids after 1880, and again especially after 1900. Although outer clothing continued to balance sexual display and sexual modesty in the manner characteristic of the nineteenth century as a whole, intimate garments and those worn in semi-private settings became more diaphanous, soft, and overtly seductive. One garment in particular—the *robe d'interieur* or tea-gown—assumed a special importance, since it alone was not primarily confined "to the bedroom and the boudoir."[43] It is my belief that the tea-gown played a significant role in the development of modern fashion, due to its unique position halfway between dress and undress. Initially akin to the humble dressing gown, the tea-gown became an increasingly elaborate but still private dress. Not only did it evade the otherwise almost universal requirement of corsetry, but its image as an "artistic" garment of "poetry" and "fantasy" permitted designers and wearers a greater degree of experimentation that helped pave the way for the radical "new look" in female fashion and beauty. To a large extent, it was via the tea-gown that many of the design ideas associated with the "aesthetic" or "healthy and artistic" dress movement entered the mainstream of fashion, in the process shedding any connatations of minority anti-fashion and austere sartorial morality. The "Cult of Chiffon" extended beyond lingerie to embrace evening gowns, blouses, tea-gowns—and, most important, attitudes toward feminine beauty in general.

Notes

1 Anne Buck, "Foundations of the Active Woman," in Ann Saunders (ed.), *La Belle Epoch, Costume 1890–1914* (London: Published for the Costume Society, 1968), p. 43.
2 Louis Octave Uzanne, *Fashion in Paris 1797–1897* (London: Heinemann, 1898), p. 172; Louis Octave Uzanne, *The Modern Parisienne* (London: Heinemann, 1912), p. 23; *The Lady's Realm* (April, 1903), p. 767; Mrs. Eric Pritchard, *The Cult of Chiffon* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), p. 16.
3 *The Lady's Realm* (December, 1902), p. 291; Lady Lucy Christiana Duff-Gordon (Lucille), *Discretions and Indiscretions* (London: Jarrolds, 1932), p. 66.
4 In 1857, for example, the Goncourts described a courtesan's expensive and erotic lingerie. *Pages from the Goncourt Journal*, trans. and ed. by Robert Baldick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 26.
5 Dr. Daumas, "Hygiène et médecine," in *Fashion-Théorie* (March, 1861), cited in Philippe Perrot, *Les Dessus et les Dessous de la bourgeoisie. Une histoire du vêtement au XIX^{e} siècle* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1981), p. 267.
6 *Home Journal* (13 February 1858), quoted in William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 219.
7 Anne Buck, "Foundations of the Active Woman," p. 43.
8 See, for example, Elizabeth Ewing, *Dress and Undress. A History of Women's Underwear* (New York: Drama Books, 1978).
9 Violette [Alice de Laincel], *L'Art de la toilette chez la femme. Bréviaire de la vie élégante* (Paris, 1885), pp. 4, 37.
10 Mrs. Eric Pritchard, *The Cult of Chiffon*, p. 15; *The Lady's Realm* (April, 1901), p. 776; (November 1901), p. 115; and (September, 1901), p. 648.
11 Mrs. Eric Pritchard, *The Cult of Chiffon*, p. 20.
12 "The Wedding Presents," *La Vie Parisienne* (17 May 1884), p. 270.
13 "Pantalons, Bas, et Chausseurs," *La Vie Parisienne* (19 February 1881), pp. 108–9; "Les Dessous" *La Vie Parisienne* (2 May 1885), pp. 252–3; "Petite Chronique," *La Vie Parisienne* (14 February 1874), p. 102.
14 "Petite Chronique," *La Vie Parisienne* (2 December 1882), p. 700.
15 "Comment Elles S'Habillent de Nuit" [How They Dress at Night], *La Vie Parisienne* (9 November 1878), pp. 650–1.

16 Pierre Dufay, *Le Pantalon féminin. Un Chapitre inedit de l'histoire du costume* (Paris: Charles Carringdon, 1906), pp. 110–11, 117–18; *Le Sport*, quoted in Romi, *Histoire pittoresque du pantalon féminin* (Paris: Jacques Grancher, 1979), p. 68.
17 Romi, *Histoire pittoresque du pantalon féminin*, pp. 58, 154; Dufay, *Le Pantalon féminin*, pp. 134, 163.
18 Violette, *L'Art de la toilette*, p. 41.
19 Rene Maizeroy, *L'Adorée*, quoted in Romi, *Histoire pittoresque du pantalon féminin*, p. 74.
20 "De l'Adultére: Conseils pratiques," *Gil Blas* (10 February 1890), quoted in Dufay, *Le Pantalon féminin*, p. 114.
21 Colette, *My Apprenticeships*, trans. by Helen Beauclerk (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1957; New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1978), p. 21.
22 *Modern Society* (26 December 1891), p. 171; *Modern Society* (20 August 1892), p. 1263; *Modern Society* (17 December 1892), p. 148; *Modern Society* (1 July 1893), p. 1034.
23 Clara Bell; *Modern Society* (11 June 1892), p. 937; "The Strange History of a Lace Petticoat," *Modern Society* (23 April 1892), p. 713; *Modern Society* (24 November 1894), p. 52.
24 *De la Kleptomanie*, quoted by Micheal Miller, *The Bon Marché. Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1689–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 204. See also *Modern Society* (25 February 1893), p. 461; SATIN SKIN, *Society* (14 October 1899), p. 1931, and the cases described in Richard Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*; William Stekel, *Sexual Aberrations. The Phenomena of Fetishism in Relation to Sex*, and Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*.
25 A few advertisements for women's corsets may have been directed toward men—who would then, presumably, buy the corsets for their wives or mistresses. These are very different from women's advertisements. One such "puff" or veiled advertisement for Madame Billaud's Corset (in *La Vie Parisienne*, 14 February 1874, p. 102) uses the technique, familiar to pornography, of comparing the woman's body with a landscape: "No engineer would know how to transform an ungrateful terrain with as much art. ... Mme Billaud ... relieves the monotony of a desert plain by the movements of the soil ... to align the highs, fill in the valleys, separate the hillocks by creating a ravine, to prevent landslides—that is only play for the clever corsetiere."

Few men wore corsets at this time. Those who did wore corsets with names that had military, aristocratic, and god-like associations. An 1899 advertisement in *Society* promoted men's corsets with the names The Marlboro, The Kitchener, and The Carlton—famous aristocratic generals. At the Kyoto Costume Institute, I saw a man's grey linen corset from the 1890s or early twentieth century with the label, "Celebrated Apollo [brand] [with] fitted Spartan unbreakable steels." Apollo was the personification of male love and beauty, while the Spartans, of course, had been famous warriors. At this time in Britain, references to the Greeks could have had homosexual connotations. Another English corset from the same period was labeled the "Double Axe Brand"—another warlike name. There is some evidence that military officers (and sportsmen) were prominent among the handful of men who continued to wear corsets in the later nineteenth century. These corset names, per se, indicate only that their wearers wanted to associate themselves with the military and the aristocracy.
26 Lady Violette Greville, *The Gentlewoman in Society* (London: Henry & Co., 1892), p. 131.
27 Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance. Purity Movements in Britain since 1700* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977), p. 206. See also Arthur W. Pearce, *The Future Out of the Past. An Illustrated History of the Warner Brothers Company on its 90th Anniversary* (Bridgeport, Connecticut: The Warner Brothers Company, 1964).
28 Madame Inez Gâches-Sarraute, *Le Corset. Étude physiologique et pratique* (Paris: Librairie de l'Academie de Médecine, 1900), pp. 12, 17, 1.
29 *The Lady's Magazine* (February, 1901), p. 217; *The Lady's Magazine* (March, 1901), p. 304.
30 Uzanne, quoted in Gertrude Aretz, *The Elegant Woman from the Rococo Period to Modern Times*, trans. James Laver. (London: G. G. Harrap, 1932), p. 273; Emile Zola, *Au bonheur des dames* [originally published 1883] (Paris: Fasquelle. Le Livre de Poche, n.d.), p. 478.
31 Mrs. Eric Pritchard, "Bridal Trousseaux," *The Lady's Realm* (April, 1903), p. 711; Ellen Peel, quoted in Betty Asquith, *A Victorian Young Lady* (Salisbury: Micheal Russell, 1978), p. 142 [A selection from the letters and diaries of Ellen Peel, covering the period 1886–1908.]; interview with Lady Naomi Mitchison, London, 1981.

32 Marguerite d'Aincourt, *Études sur le costume féminin* (Paris: Rouveyre et G. Blond, 1883), pp. 14–15.
33 Elinor Glyn, *The Vicissitudes of Evangeline* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1905), pp. 99–100.
34 Baronne d'Orchamps, *Tous les secrets de la femme* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Auteurs Modernes, 1907), pp. 78, 79.
35 Comtesse de Tramar, *Le Bréviaire de la femme. Pratiques secrètes de la beauté*, eight edition. (Paris: V. Havard, 1903), pp. 115, 169–71.
36 Uzanne, *Fashion in Paris 1797–1897*, p. 172; Cecil Lorraine, "Frou-Frou," *The Lady's Realm* (December, 1904), p. 170.
37 Pierre de Lano, *L'Amour à Paris sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Simonis Empis, 1896), p. 182, quoted in Perrot, *Les Dessus et les Dessous*, p. 282.
38 *La Vie Parisienne* (1888), pp. 88–89, quoted in Kunzle, *Fashion and Fetishishm*, p. 60.
39 d'Orchamps, *Tous les secrets de la femme*, pp. 78–9.
40 Uzanne, *The Modern Parisienne*, pp. 25–6.
41 d'Orchamps, *Tous les secrets de la femme*, pp. 78–9.
42 *The Lady's Magazine* (February, 1901), p. 217; *Womanhood* (May, 1903), p. 433.
43 *The Lady's Realm* (December, 1902), p. 286.

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24 De-Gendering Fashion in Mainstream Media

Katrina Sark

Introduction

While "mainstream" is defined as "a prevailing current or direction of activity or influence" and as "reflecting the prevailing attitudes and values of a society or group,"[1] mainstream media used to refer to "the traditional forms of mass media, such as television, radio, magazines, and newspapers, as opposed to online means of mass communication,"[2] However, with the rise of digital and social media, the predominant current of activity and influence began to shift across various traditional and digital media stands, often echoing across multiple platforms, thus increasing the possibilities of going viral and reaching wider audiences. In this chapter, I use "mainstream" as an umbrella term to include digital and traditional forms of media that have a large following and tend to influence cultural discourses. I use the methodologies of cultural and media analysis to examine the intersections between fashion, gender, media representations, as well as power dynamics, to gain a better understanding of cultural patterns, developments, and innovations. This chapter examines several examples of de-gendering fashion in mainstream media, music, entertainment, and social media, with a particular focus on the representations of (Gen Z) cis masculinities in the years 2020 and 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The year 2021 was the first year when the various social and cultural impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent in terms of changing work and leisure practices, consumption and production practices, as well as the role of fashion and clothing in most people's daily lives. Shopping, fashion marketing, and communication practices, and even fashion exhibitions and presentations had to move into the digital realm. Athleisure and casual wear became visual manifestations of the changing work- and lifestyles. But perhaps the most prevailing and lasting impacts of the pandemic became the global socio-political movements like the #BlackLivesMatter protests, the ongoing #MeToo testimonies, as well as the continuous climate crisis demonstrations around the world.

In fashion culture, the sociopolitical and environmental movements sparked several waves of activism with the #PayUp campaigns in protest of the fast fashion companies refusing to pay their garment workers, cancelling already made orders, or demanding discounts from their supply chains, thus forcing many (mostly women) workers into starvation. Furthermore, as the collective tolerance for greenwashing and ethical-washing in the fashion industry continues to decline thanks to consumers and activists calling out brands and companies for misrepresenting their products as "sustainable," the pressure for national and EU legislation is also rising. The years 2020–2021 also witnessed a loosening of various forms of gatekeeping that restricted accessibility,

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inclusivity, or any visible and overt discriminations, as they were increasingly threatened by collective (digital) cancel culture. In response to many instances of calling out of racist and exploitative representation and labor practices, as well as numerous greenwashing and woke-washing scandals, many fashion companies began to publicly revise their corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, often by hiring consultants to clean up their brand images (perhaps most notably Gucci hired Kim Jenkins, the creator of the Fashion and Race Database, as a consultant in 2020). I would also add that in 2020 and 2021 more cis men started publicly wearing skirts and dresses, sparking a media debate on gender, race, fashion, representation, and appropriation.

While de-gendering fashion has been part of fashion culture from the beginning of time (for historical examples, see Valerie Hotchkiss' *Clothes Make the Man* (1996) on the Medieval period, Robin Chantree's research on the eighteenth-century Molly Houses of London (2021), Nigel Lezama's research on nineteenth-century dandy androgynous fashion (2021), Clare Sears' *Arresting Dress* (2015) on the history of anti-cross-dressing laws in the United States, the US fashion designer Elizabeth Hawes, who designed a series of skirts for men—displayed in a 1967 retrospective at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) and profiled in a book by Bettina Berch (1988),[3] as well as many well-documented examples from the punk movement, and the reintroduction of men's skirts or divided skirts by the Japanese deconstructionist designers), while trans and non-binary activists have been calling for gender-neutral fashion not only as a fashionable renaissance, but also as an "anti-violence imperative,"[4] and while many cis and heterosexual male celebrities and musicians have always been wearing skirts, dresses, high heels, and makeup simply because they can, this chapter investigates the cultural changes manifested in fashion that took place in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and how they were reflected and represented in the media.

My methodology is based on media and cultural analysis, fashion history, and gender studies. This multidisciplinary approach allows for a deeper understanding of the cultural and political developments in fashion and for an interpretive analysis of mainstream media and cultural trends. The theoretical sources and case studies I selected for analysis in this chapter help us understand the intersectional connections of gender, race, class, and representation in fashion and in media. My hope is that this research and analysis can also inspire and influence how we teach fashion media and fashion culture. Fashion history is an important component of fashion culture, and even though this chapter's focus is on the recent history of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transformation in the fashion industry leading up to it and after, I still rely on larger historical perspectives to be able to interpret and analyze recent events. De-gendering fashion is not a new phenomenon, and the history of fashion is full of examples of rebels, rule-breakers, outliers, and pioneers who broke the constructed codes of fashion, but as I demonstrate in this chapter, in the time leading up to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was significant shift in mainstream media and mainstream fashion in pushing against the gender binaries, especially for cis men.

This chapter is divided into three subsections. First, I present an overview of the #DeGenderFashion movement launched by the non-binary activist Alok Vaid-Menon and its connections to media. Then, I outline the various examples if cis men appearing in feminine-coded attire in mainstream media throughout 2020 and 2021, and finally I look at the role of fashion as an industry and as a culture in de-gendering fashion. My research revealed that while de-gendering fashion is a political and decolonial project, there are many different manifestation and practices of it that are often conflicting and contradictory. But it is precisely this paradoxical nature of fashion that allows us to use it both playfully and politically, as well as for personal and collective empowerment.

#DeGenderFashion

In November 2019, the gender non-conforming activist, performer, and writer Alok Vaid-Menon posted the slogan "DEGENDERING FASHION IS AN ANTI-VIOLENCE IMPERATIVE" on their blog, claiming that de-gendering fashion is a "necessary move" and "should be understood as an anti-violence imperative," and explaining that "de-gendering fashion will proliferate more images of people like me, so I won't have to be the first that people encounter, will create more expansive images of masculinity and femininity such that we aren't read as incongruous, just another way to be."[5] Following their talk at the Business of Fashion (#BoFVoices) stage in 2019, entitled "Clothes Have No Gender," their hashtag campaign #DeGenderFashion gained traction and began growing into a social movement. In that talk, they called for a complete de-gendering of the fashion and beauty industries, noting that "any article of clothing should be for anyone who wants to wear it, regardless of their gender. Casting, marketing, and sales must reflect this value." Holding fashion media accountable, they specifically stressed that "it is incorrect for publications to celebrate cis-gender heterosexual people as the vanguards of the gender-neutral fashion trend and the new masculinity. We [gender non-conforming and non-binary people] have been doing this since the very beginning. We are not a trend. We are not a moment. We are a movement." While this direct call out to the fashion and beauty industries may not have been accepted universally yet, the message did trickle down various media channels in interesting ways, empowering many people to move beyond the binary. Moreover, social media support began to pour out for boys around the world wearing skirts to school, and when a Spanish 15-year-old Mikel Gómez was removed from class and forced to see a psychologist after wearing a skirt to school in October 2020, many teachers and students across Spain responded by wearing skirts as part of a nationwide #LaRopaNoTieneGénero or #ClothesHaveNoGender protest.[6]

In their call to action, Vaid-Menon gave specific examples of actions that can help de-gendering fashion, from within and from outside the fashion industry, including,

> amplifying the leadership of trans and non-binary creatives, donating proceeds to organizations that fight for trans justice, and taking a firm stand against the rising wave of global transphobia. Casting a diverse array of genders, sizes, abilities and races in every single show and campaign, not just perfunctory Pride capsule collections. It looks like ending Men's Fashion Week and Women's Fashion Week and instead just having Fashion Week, moving beyond gender-segregated stores and men's magazines and women's magazines. Gender neutrality is not about forcing everyone to be non-binary or "erasing your right to be men or women," but rather it is about creating more expansive images of femininity, masculinity, and beauty for everyone. Fashion should proliferate possibility, not constrain it. Gender neutrality is most of all an anti-violence imperative. The time has come for us to hold the fashion and beauty industries accountable for playing a significant role and creating regressive and violent gender stereotypes.[7]

Thus, positioning the fashion industry not only as complicit in gender injustice, but also as responsible for perpetuating stereotypes and violence was a powerful critique and simultaneously a call to action that resonated with many activists who want to reform the unsustainable, unethical, still colonial, and exploitative industry. By connecting gender representations, labor practices, discriminations, and injustices with colonial and exploitative power structures under which the fashion industry has always operated and continues to enforce without any accountability, Vaid-Menon laid out the implications, dangers, and violence of not taking responsibility and thus perpetuating the unethical, sexist, and racist practices within the industry.

In that, their work echoed Ibrahim X. Kendi's call to action in his book, *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019), which stressed that it is no longer acceptable to not take a stand on racism and merely be a bystander in the struggle for racial justice. Kendi claimed that the neutrality afforded by claims to be "not racist" has allowed for injustice and violence to be perpetuated for too long, that "neutrality is a mask for racism," and that the opposite of racism is not neutrality, but actively practicing in antiracism.[8]

In terms of cultural industries and practices, Kendi defined cultural racism as "creating a cultural standard and imposing a cultural hierarchy among racial groups," while cultural anti-racism includes "rejecting cultural standards and equalizing cultural differences among racial groups."[9] Similarly, Kendi described gender antiracism as "a powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to equity between race-genders,"[10] and specifically stressed that "to truly be antiracist is to be feminist. To truly be feminist is to be antiracist,"[11] and that queer antiracism is about "striving to eliminate the inequalities between the race-sexualities" because "we cannot be antiracist if we are homophobic or transphobic."[12] It is not a coincidence that Kendi's book was at the top of the recommended readings list for white people to educate themselves on racial injustice in the aftermath of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in the spring of 2020.[13] The intersections of race, gender, sexualities, and class have been outlined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw since 1991, but what Kendi, Vaid-Menon, and other activists made clear was that remaining neutral in the face of injustice and violence was no longer an ethical option.

Building on the political intersections of gender, race, class, and representation in their 2020 book, *Beyond the Gender Binary*, Vaid-Menon argued that

> The gender binary is set up for us to fail. For us all to fail. The gender binary is more concerned with gender norms than it is with us. We are led to believe that there are only two genders, "man" and "woman," and these genders are narrow, separate, and opposite. We are taught from a very young age that this is how things have always been and this is the only way to live. We are taught that masculinity belongs to men, femininity belongs to women, and that these are the only two options for self-expression. Not true.[14]

They made a clear distinction between tolerance and acceptance, which points to how current mainstream culture and media treats non-binary people, explaining that

> People might tolerate the existence of gender non-conforming people, but tolerance is not the same thing as acceptance. Tolerance is always about maintaining distance: "This is about something over there that doesn't concern me." Acceptance, on the other hand, is about integrating difference into your own life: "This is about something that I'm a part of, and I need to learn more to better help." True acceptance can be uncomfortable at first, precisely because it takes work. Unfortunately, many people would rather prioritize their own comfort over our livelihood.[15]

This distinction also connects with Kendi's argument that mere tolerance or indifference or ignorance are no longer acceptable in terms of what constitutes justice. Thus, the work of Vaid-Menon, Kendi, and many other antiracist and decolonial activists and writers provided not only clear definitions and guidelines for allyship in times of social unrest, but contributed to a cultural shift in ethical responsibility and collective actions that cannot be undone in terms of how we understand social justice and social progress.

Finally, in January 2022, in an episode entitled "Can We Say Bye-Bye to the Binary?" on *Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness,* produced by Netflix, the host Jonathan Van Ness of *Queer Eye* met with Alok Vaid-Menon, as well as with the first Indigenous two-spirit elected official in the State of Maine, Geo Neptune, and with the gender-nonconforming activist Joshua Allen, who is the director of @blackxcollective, in New York's iconic Stonewall Inn to discuss the systematic cultural and social erasure of gender non-conforming people throughout history. In their conversation, they highlight the connections between racism, transphobia, white supremacy, and colonialism. As Vaid-Menon explained in that episode,

> One of the things that people don't realize is that nineteenth-century European and US American scientists were explicit in believing that only white people could have a gender binary. They would argue that the reason that Black people, Indigenous people, and other racialized people across the world were "less human" was because they were quote-unquote, their words, not mine, "sexually ambiguous." And so, they would say, as you evolve as a civilization, you move into these binary categories of male and female. So, homophobia and transphobia are part of this larger racial project of white supremacy, which is trying to make white people the ultimate civilization on Earth.

Geo Neptune added, "It's very apparent, specifically in the history of colonization of Indigenous people on Turtle Island [North America], that in order to take this society that didn't have a gender binary, it had more of a gender circle, and get it to conform, was by removing all the people who didn't fall into either of those categories. So, that erasure of two-spirit traditions was very intentional." The systematic eradication and cultural genocide of two-spirit and gender non-conforming people from history reveals the strong connection between racism, sexism, transphobia, and coloniality that continue to persist to this day. In response, Joshua Allen pointed out that while the world responded in protest to the murders of cis Black people, the names of murdered trans and non-binary people remain unmentioned, thus highlighting the discrepancies in the "economies of care" or "attention" that have been ongoing even within the queer community. But Allen's take-aways for the audience at the end of the episode is that "my version of liberation looks like us being happy. […] I believe that we deserve full lives of abundance. We contribute so much value and brilliance to the world around us, and we deserve to revel in that luxury and that happiness and joy that we bring into the world." Jonathan Van Ness concludes the episode with the take-aways, noting that

> Visibility is important, but what visibility does not do is extinguish transphobia everywhere. This toxic masculinity, this misogynistic culture that we're in that says men do this and women do that does not honour the complexity of being a human who has experienced a multitude of situations and could never water all of that down to exactly one of two things, male and female. My dream for the future is that no

> one's gender identity or gender expression prevents them from achieving what they want to achieve in their lives. We can all have a unique experience of the gender spectrum, and we all have the right and the ability to inhabit that spectrum in a way that feels authentic and natural to us.

The cultural value of making this conversation accessible in mainstream media (on Netflix, available for streaming in 190 countries, in many different languages, to 221.64 million subscribers as of 2022)[16] is ground-breaking. The work of connecting these crucial political points to fashion (which Jonathan Van Ness did by including a conversation with designer Christian Siriano about gender and size inclusivity in fashion design, as well as the importance of seeing trans and non-binary people represented in fashion) is important because of the role clothing plays not only in constructing identities, but also as Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas argued in their book, *Queer Style* (2013), "in constructing material identity and its shaping of personal and social space."[17]

Thus, the project of de-gendering fashion is not only highly political, but also vital for cultural and social progress. Together, these activists and scholars have laid out the intersections between race, gender, identities, (mis)representation, colonial legacies, and the cultural shift in the understanding of social justice, not only in the academic spheres, but in mainstream culture. However, in the slow and conservative business world of fashion, this conversation is still presented in terms of marketing and branding "men's nail polish" and other unnecessarily gendered products to expand market shares to what is often identified as "new Gen Z masculinities" (BoF). In the rest of this chapter, I examine the media representations of cis men in skirts and dresses and the debates that ensued following Harry Style's *Vogue* cover, in which he wore a Gucci dress, in order to map out the cultural changes that began to gain momentum during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

The First Man on the Cover of US *Vogue*

Even though many Gen Z celebrities, activists, and influencers have been advocating for genderless and non-binary fashion for many years, since the release of the December 2020 issue of American *Vogue* with musician Harry Styles, styled by Camilla Nickerson and Harry Lambert, posing in a Gucci dress on the cover and in several featured photos taken by Tyler Mitchell (who was the first black photographer hired by Beyoncé for her *Vogue* cover in September 2018), several cis male musicians, influencers, and other entertainers started appearing in mainstream media wearing skirts, dresses, high heels, makeup, and statement purses, and other garments traditionally coded as feminine. For example, musician Kid Cudi wore a white floral dress designed by the late Virgil Abloh (the first black artistic director of Louis Vuitton) for his *Saturday Night Life* performance in April 2021 that was inspired by Kurt Cobain's floral dress. Hip-hop artist Lil Nas X wore a skirt on the *Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* after his performance on *Saturday Night Life* in May 2021; Damiano David, the lead of the Italian rock band Måneskin, wore high heels, makeup, nail polish, long pearl earrings, and burgundy leather pants for the winning performance on the *Eurovision Song Contest* in May 2021, followed by many photographs of him in skirts and lingerie posted on his Instagram feed. All of the band members of Måneskin attributed the inspiration for their fashion choices to Harry Styles. During their concert in Poland in June 2021, the band received an outpouring of applause after bandmates Damiano David and Thomas Raggi shared a kiss live on stage in support of LGBTQ+ rights amid growing hostility towards queer people in Poland. The June/July 2021 cover of *GQ Magazine* featured the rapper and hip-hop artist A$AP Rocky in a Vivienne Westwood kilt, styled by George Cortina and photographed by Inez & Vinoodh, under the headline, "The Prettiest Man Alive." That same year, retired NBA player Dennis Rodman posed in a textured skirt designed by Thom Browne and styled by Simon Rasmussen in *GQ Sports*, photographed by Mychal Denzel Smith.[18]

This is by no means a new phenomenon in music entertainment, rockstars from David Bowie to The New Romantics and U2 have used drag, cross-dressing, and playful androgyny as performative acts of rebellion against sartorial gender codes.[19] Since the 1970s Glam Rock era, cis male rockstars have had the privilege to dress in glitter, sequence, makeup, high heels, skirts, and dresses—simultaneously challenging masculinity through camp and androgynous alter egos, while also using their popularity as sex symbols to enhance their masculinity and desirability. "Gender-bending" and "cross-dressing" in rock and glam music videos carried the cultural capital of punk rebellion and camp subversiveness. U2's three music videos for their song *One* included a version directed by Anton Corbijn filmed in newly reunited Berlin, featuring the band members recording at the famous Hansa Studios (where Bowie recorded his Berlin albums) interspersed with footage of them dressed in drag, inspired by the group's experiences dressing in drag for the Carnival of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. However, eventually the band pulled this version of the video, fearing backlash for their efforts to raise money for AIDS.[20] Mimi Schippers identified this phenomenon as "hybrid masculinity" that denotes ways of "exploring the queer practices of people who identify as heterosexual."[21]

According to Ashley Morgan, "dressing in feminine clothing demonstrates a desire for male performers to distinguish themselves from others in order to challenge hegemonic male conservatism in clothing."[22] Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas noted that by the 1980s, "the blurring of gender and sexual boundaries had become prevalent across a range of entertainment mediums, from fashion catwalks to pop music, especially the so-called New Romantics," including performances by Duran Duran, Ultravox, Visage, Spandau Ballet, ABC NS Adam and the Ants, Boy George of Culture Club, and Marilyn (Peter Robinson).[23] These "transgressive *gender bender* music celebrities" practiced "their flirtation with the dissolution of sartorial codes" at a time when the emergence of MTV (launched in 1981) provided them with a mass media stage, and when the entertainment industry "recognized the value of fashion and style as forms of visual codification in gaining audience popularity."[24] Even though drag and androgyny have been fashionable many times in history,[25] many fashion historians identified the 1970s Glam Rock era as a time when "fashion challenged preconceived notions of masculinity,"[26] "paving the way for the punks and New Romantics" of the 1980s.[27]

In the new millennium, actor and performer Jaden Smith, the son of Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith, has often been photographed in skirts at most of his official and unofficial public appearances and fashion shoots since 2015, which made him an LGBTQ+ icon for "fighting for self-expression for his generation and the next."[28] It is also not a coincidence that in the last few years, *RuPaul's Drag Race* franchise has expanded to Chile (2015), Thailand (2018), the UK (2019), Canada (2020), Netherlands (2020), Australia and New Zealand (2021), Italy (2021), Spain (2021), France (2022), and the Philippines (2022),[29] with the largest expansion in the years 2020 and 2021 and available to mass audiences around the world through Netflix.

Harry Styles' origin band One Direction (launched after performing at the British singing competition show *The X Factor* in 2010) featured some cross-dressing in their videos. After launching his solo career in 2017, Styles was interviewed by *The Guardian* about his clothing choices and sexuality in 2019, and he noted that

> What women wear. What men wear. For me it's not a question of that. If I see a nice shirt and get told, 'But it's for ladies.' I think: 'Okaaaay? Doesn't make me want to wear it less though.' I think the moment you feel more comfortable with yourself, it all becomes a lot easier. A part of it was having, like, a big moment of self-reflection. And self-acceptance. I think it's a very free, and freeing, time. I think people are asking, 'Why not?' a lot more. Which excites me. It's not just clothes where lines have been blurred, it's going across so many things. I think you can relate it to music, and how genres are blurring … Am I sprinkling in nuggets of sexual ambiguity to try and be more interesting? No. In terms of how I wanna dress, and what the album sleeve's gonna be, I tend to make decisions in terms of collaborators I want to work with. I want things to look a certain way. Not because it makes me look gay, or it makes me look straight, or it makes me look bisexual, but because I think it looks cool. And more than that, I dunno, I just think sexuality's something that's fun. Honestly? I can't say I've given it any more thought than that."[30]

Styles' nonchalant tone and purposeful de-politization of sexuality, gender, and fashion serve his image as a celebrity innovator popular with all genders, while also allowing him to use his privileges to have the media attention for gender-bending and dating women at the same time.

In response to the *Vogue* cover, Gucci's head designer Alessandro Michele praised Styles, stating that "he is the image of a new era, of the way that a man can look," and "I think that he's a revolutionary."[31] But as the ensuing media debates revealed, the media and PR machinery (including his appearances in *Vogue*, *SNL*, and other mainstream and digital media platforms) that positioned Harry Styles to be presented and subsequently celebrated as a "revolutionary" were rooted in a colonial framework of constructing privileged cis male whiteness as avant-garde, while ignoring or marginalizing trans, non-binary, and queer people of color who have been at the front of this struggle for a long time with often severe and violent consequences. Layla F. Saad described these media practices as over-representation of white privilege and white narratives in culture, in which white-centering continues as a way of making everyday racism and the lack of representation invisible.[32]

Moreover, as Jared Michael Lowe noted in his article, "Pop Stars Didn't Invent Gender Fluidity" in *Teen Vogue* from September 26, 2017, "when gender identities are thought of as trends, it only further harms an already-marginalized community."[33] As luxury fashion designers such as Thom Browne, Vivienne Westwood, and Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele began to diversify their runways and their collections, showcasing gender-fluid garments, the mainstream celebrity culture followed suit. As Lowe argued, "as the fashion industry slowly shifts the tide to be more diverse, inclusive, and gender-fluid, celebrities would proudly start wearing garments that blur gender norms. But as they merely experiment with gender-fluid fashion—without actually standing on the front lines of the gender-fluid movement—are we giving them too much credit for sparking change?"[34]

According to Judith Butler,[35] gender is an action and a practice, not a given fact and not biologically essential. We perform or practice our gender in social interactions with others, whether in drag, while gender-bending, or while wearing clothes that are coded feminine, masculine, non-binary, or blending all genders. This is different from the performativity of gender for non-binary and trans people, who are expressing their authentic selves through the use of fashion, makeup, and other visible markers of gender. Even with the prospect of a backlash both from the conservative right (still demanding toxic masculinity codes and heteronormativity) and the mainstream cancel culture (criticizing white male privilege to subvert or appropriate queer culture for profit), Harry Styles has reached a level in his career, cultural or symbolic capital, and privilege that allows him to take the risks that are not possible for many LGBTQ+ people for whom it is not a matter of choice or performance, but a matter of daily survival. The representation of trans- and gender-fluid people is still not as widely accepted or mainstream as the representations of cis men who choose to wear "feminine" clothes for self-empowerment. What madison moore described as "fabulousness" of "*couturing* of the self"[36] is the attempt of queer and trans people to take control of their own image[37] and applies to "people who take the risk of making a spectacle of themselves," people who do not fit in, are often marginalized for their creativity and eccentricity, and who are not cis-gendered, white, male, and straight.[38]

One of the most thoughtful critiques of Harry Styles' *Vogue* cover came from Alok Vaid-Menon in their blog post, entitled "#DEGENDERFASHION: HARRY STYLES ON THE COVER OF VOGUE" in November 2020, in which they stated,

> Am I happy to see Harry be celebrated for openly flouting gendered fashion norms? Yes. Do trans femmes of colour receive praise for doing the same thing every day? No. Do I think this is a sign of progress of society's evolution away from binary gender? Yes. Do I think that white men should be upheld as the face of gender-neutral fashion? No. […] It's a curious thing this: holding space for joy, while also insisting on a more expansive form of freedom. […] We can both acknowledge this unprecedented moment while also remembering that it could only happen because of the resistance of trans femmes of colour. We who for decades were imprisoned by cross-dressing legislation. Make no mistake: trans femmes of colour started this and continue to face the backlash from it. Our aesthetics make it to the mainstream, but not our bodies. We are still dismissed as "too much" and "too queer" because we aren't palatable enough to whiteness and heteronormativity. […] Is that Harry's fault? No. It's the fault of systems of transmisogyny and racism. I want a world where everyone — regardless of their gender — can wear whatever they want. He is exercising that and giving permission for other people to do the same and that makes me so happy!! I can both celebrate that and be cautious about the politics of representation.[39]

Vaid-Menon chose to focus their criticism on the systems of transmisogyny and racism in culture and media, rather than on Harry's choices and privileges, while emphasizing why de-gendering fashion is a political and necessary step towards decoloniality.

In October 2021, while promoting his memoir, the Grammy-, Emmy-, and Tony-winning actor, performer, and activist Billy Porter gave an interview to *The Sunday Times*, claiming "I created the conversation, and yet *Vogue* still put Harry Styles, a straight white man, in a dress on their cover for the first time,"[40] referring to his own appearance at the 2019 Oscars in a black velvet tuxedo gown designed by Christian Siriano. Porter's embrace by the fashion world occurred late in his career with his 2019 Emmy-winning performance in *Pose* (2018–2021), but his impact on de-gendering fashion was undeniable. His frustration with *Vogue's* cover choice was not just echoing other activist voices in the BIPOC or queer communities, but also personal: "I changed the whole game," Porter argued in the interview, "He [Harry Styles] doesn't care, he's just doing it because it's the thing to do. This is politics for me. This is my life. I had to fight my entire life to get to the place where I could wear a dress to the Oscars... All he has to do is be white and straight."[41] Thus, Porter publicly called out Style's apolitical stance and privilege of not risking anything in pursuit of his artistic self-expression, that manifested as a "more palatable symbol of rejecting gender conformity for *Vogue* than other more vocal, politically invested openly LGBTQ+ individuals" at a time when the Human Rights Campaign has tracked fatal violence against trans people since 2013, and identified 2021 as the deadliest year recorded, with a new wave of anti-trans legislation flooding state legislatures that year.[42] Following the controversy and backlash that erupted after his interview, Billy Porter was forced to make a statement during his appearance on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* in November 2021, saying, "Harry Styles, I apologize to you for having your name in my mouth. It's not about you. It is about the oppression and the erasure of people of colour who contribute to the culture. That's a lot to unpack. I'm willing to unpack it sans the dragging and culture of the Internet."[43]

The fashion industry and its media still operate on outdated and colonial frameworks of empowerment. The criticism that both *Vogue* and Harry Styles received in response to that cover image point to a cultural conversation that needed to be moved into the mainstream media. In that sense, Harry Styles opened the flood gates we are now witnessing, as fashion culture is slowly emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, precisely because of his whiteness and because LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities never get the same praise, recognition, or representation. The colonial undertones and practices of US *Vogue* as an institution and media giant that privileges whiteness, as well as its editor Anna Wintour (whom many have accused of racism during the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and called for her resignation) have been criticized by the late André Leon Talley, who openly called Wintour "a colonial lady" in his 2020 memoir *The Chiffon Trenches*.[44]

In fact, all media, fashion, and celebrity culture are mired in colonial and white supremacist practices, where some (white) innovations go viral, while others (BIPOC or queer) remain flat. Why did the activist Tarana Burke's 2006 #MeToo movement only catch mainstream fire when actress Alyssa Milano re-tweeted it in 2017 and prompted other powerful celebrities to come forward in support, making it a global movement? Why did it take Justin Bieber's Anglo vocal contribution to Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi's *Despasito* to make it the first LatinX song to break through on the US charts, while popularizing Spanish pop music in the mainstream music markets?[45] The answers lie at the intersections of a complex matrix of white supremacist media preferences, cultural timing and layering, perseverance and resilience of creativity and activism despite gate keeping, technological accessibility, education, and many other factors.

Layla F. Saad argued that we are all born into a system of white supremacy, designed to keep most unaware of what having this "unearned privilege, protection, and power" has meant for people of color.[46] In fashion, these racial and gendered injustices often play out in terms of the appropriation of cultural fashion styles, the use of blackface symbology, the appropriation of traditionally African heritage hairstyles, and many more injustices, resulting in the practice of re-writing history with whiteness at the center.[47] This type of white-centering is so common in mainstream culture that we seldom question it, as non-white narratives are usually seen as "less relevant, except for when being co-opted through cultural appropriation or being reimagined through a white lens."[48] Instead, tokenism is implemented to elevate brand images, which Saad defined as "the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort, especially by recruiting a smaller number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce," while "continuing to maintain the status quo of white as the dominant norm."[49] These ethical-washing strategies include brand tokenism, storytelling tokenism, relational tokenism (when a person with white privilege uses their proximity to and relationships with BIPOC as proof that they are not racist), and emotional labor tokenism (when predominantly white organizations places the burden on token BIPOC to carry the emotional labor of discussing and working on all matters related to racism, thus reducing them simply to their race).[50]

Thus, the project of de-gendering fashion cannot be separated from its political agenda if we want a real cultural shift and any social progress towards justice, rather than mere tokenism or "gender-bending" playfulness. As we all individually and collectively renegotiate our engagement with de-gendering fashion, especially in light of the racial justice protests of 2020 and 2021, it is important to remember that remaining neutral in the face of injustice and violence does no longer go unnoticed. In the final section of this chapter, I address the role of the fashion industry and its slow slouch towards progress.

Role of Fashion as an Industry and as a Culture

The paradoxical nature of the fashion industry[51] does not cease to astonish, as sustainability and growth, innovation and stagnation, creativity and exploitation continuously persist and coexist. According to a 2015 report by trend forecasting agency J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group, only 48% of Gen Zs identified as exclusively heterosexual, compared to 65% of millennials. Those belonging to Gen Z also rejected the gender binary while shopping—only 44% said they always bought clothes designed for their own gender, versus 54% of millennials.[52] A 2020 survey conducted by Vice Media confirmed that 56% of Gen Z consumers already shop outside the gender norms, ignoring clothing labels and the gendered sections in stores.[53] The fashion industry began to respond accordingly. The London department store Selfridges launched its "genderless shopping experience" in 2015. Fast Fashion retailer Zara used male and female models for the same collection in 2017. The French, Italian, and Mexican *Vogue* featured people from the LGBTQ+ community on their covers. In 2020, London Fashion Week decided to go gender-neutral and seasonless from 2021.[54]

Currently (as of 2022), Instagram's handle #meninskirts has 25,892 posts from people all around the world.[55] The 61-year-old social media fashion model, trendsetter, and influencer Mark Bryan (@markbryan911) is an engineer originally from Texas who relocated to Stuttgart, Germany and describes himself on his Instagram biography as "straight, cis male, lifelong @porsche fan & loves wearing heels & skirts daily." He currently has 663k followers (and the number is going up weekly). He has been posting photos of himself wearing skirts and high heels daily since he joined Instagram in January 2020. In January 2022, he was invited to the Institut Française de la Mode in Paris to host a "Mark Bryan Design Challenge," in which 29 first-year fashion design students made skirts for him, from which he selected the best seven as winners. He has been interviewed and profiled by both traditional media and digital media platforms and celebrated as a fashion icon.

Simultaneously, in a Business of Fashion (BoF) article from June 2021 entitled, "Gen Z is Reimagining Masculinity. Brands Are, Too," Chavie Lieber interviewed styles bloggers, digital creators, and brand strategists, who stressed that Gen Z is responsible for "the widening definitions of masculinity," with musicians, influencers and photographers using social media to "push the norm when it comes to fashion and style and this goes for gay and straight men" because "the younger generation doesn't want to be stuck in a box of what is and isn't allowed."[56] In response to what the forecasters have identified as the new generation's preferences and tastes for "evolving masculinity," many brands, such as Levi's, Stella McCartney, Gucci, PacSun, Nordstrom, and Hollister, and others, began including more gender-neutral clothing in their collections.[57] But instead of actually embracing the genderless revolution, the fashion industry and its media (including BoF) continue to generate and push gendered product lines like "men's nail polish" by highlighting "male shoppers' many identities," and urging brands to "go the extra mile to showcase men in less traditionally male spaces" not only during Father's Day campaigns or by highlighting diversity during Pride, but also with strategies that include "a year-round consideration" because "young male shoppers want to see all different types of body types and personalities."[58] As demonstrated by the example of the British men's makeup brand "War Paint," which was ridiculed in 2019 for its name and advertising, the "attempt to utilise toxic masculinity to sell its product" is no longer a viable marketing strategy.[59]

In another successful PR venture, Harry Styles launched a gender-neutral beauty brand, entitled "Pleasing," in November 2021, urging his social media followers to "Find Your Pleasing" in his vegan and cruelty-free beauty range that currently comprises six products: four nail polishes, a two-in-one roller-ball lip and eye serum, and a facial serum, at affordable prices available online.[60] Yet, the press release announcement that the brand celebrates "the multitude of unique identities in our community"[61] does not clarify which community that may be—all of Gen Z? Thus, Styles joined a "growing list of male celebrities to launch nail products in recent years, including A$AP Rocky, Machine Gun Kelly and Lil Yachty,"[62] using de-gendering fashion as marketing tool. In an interview with *Dazed* magazine, Styles shared that he had worked on his beauty product line during the COVID-19 pandemic and that there will be more products to come.[63] The fashion community's embrace of Harry Styles as a fashion influencer has also been highlighted by the Victoria & Albert Museum's acquisition of the Harry Styles cardigan that "sparked a TikTok craze,"[64] again illustrating how the fashion industry and fashion's cultural institutions construct their narratives about what is "fashionable" along the lines of privilege, whiteness, and growth.

Despite the many calls for de-growth to make the currently unsustainable fashion industry more sustainable at a time of a global climate crisis, there are very few collective efforts made to actually reinvent the growth-economy or any of its production practices. Celebrity and influencer endorsements of products, brands, and campaigns are only called out by activist groups but not by fashion or mainstream media (as for example the recent collaboration between the Japanese fast fashion brand UNIQLO that over-paid tennis player Roger Federer for his endorsement, while under paying its garment workers in the Global South).[65]

In his book, *The Day the World Stops Shopping* (2021), Canadian journalist J.B. MacKinnon argued that "inequality helps drive consumerism, mainly by intensifying status competition so that obvious markers of wealth and success, whether they be more expensive phones, luxury cars or globe-trotting adventures that we post on social media, become more important, which in turn makes the pursuit of money more important. Simply put, inequality pushes materialistic values."[66] According to MacKinnon, when in May 2020, with the first wave of the COVID-19 lockdowns still not fully lifted around the world, a police officer in Minneapolis killed George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter movement erupted into a national, and then international, reckoning on racial injustice, the virality of the response could be explained with two psychological factors:

> One was an effect of non-commercial time. With many people not working, schooling, commuting or consuming, millions had a rare window of freedom to turn their attention to bigger issues. But the widespread shift toward intrinsic values could have played a role as well. Research consistently shows that less materialistic people are also less self-involved and more likely to feel empathy for others. They tend to be less racially and ethnically prejudiced; they are less comfortable with having social domination over those who are different from them. […] In other words, part of the reason that more change than usual came out of an otherwise all-too-familiar police killing may have been that a larger percentage of the population interpreted that terrible event with a mindset distinctly unlike the one that usually gets them through the daily work-and-spend grind. A world that stops shopping could move from personal transformation to social upheaval – and the change could begin in a matter of minutes.[67]

Thus, as MacKinnon noted, the "impacts of shopping are often underestimated,"[68] and a world without shopping would be "a leaner, more efficient consumer culture" and "might also tilt toward innovation that is more often genuinely useful."[69] Currently, the fashion industry's primary goal is to sell more stuff while continuously maximizing its profits. But what would it take to shift the culture of fashion from economic towards cultural value as a sphere of cultural influence, innovation, creativity, social progress, and justice?

Conclusion

Despite the long history of de-gendering fashion and breaking gendered fashion codes on the margins and through individualized rebellions, in the time leading up to and during the COVID-19 pandemic there was significant shift in mainstream media and mainstream fashion in pushing against the gender binaries, especially for cis men, who began appearing in feminine-coded attire in mainstream media throughout 2020 and 2021. Simultaneously, the branding of non-binary fashion and beauty products in the fashion industry was geared and concentrated towards pushing profits and promoting overconsumption by mobilizing non-binary values, representations, and discourse. These paradoxical practices in the fashion industry are often conflicting and contradictory, and the mainstream incorporates sub-cultures it sees as profitable.

De-gendering fashion is a decolonial, antiracist, and intersectionally feminist process that is also deeply connected to political, social, economic, and cultural systems. In a pluralistic, globalized, and capitalist society, this process takes on many shapes and representations that can be paradoxical and often contradictory. As this chapter demonstrated, de-gendering fashion happens for different reasons and motivations, but what they all have in common is a desire to break through and away from gender codes and binaries, and to dismantle them through the use of fashion. Whether politically motivated or for profit or cultural capital, the numerous examples of de-gendering fashion in 2020 and 2021 cannot be ignored and serve as an inspiration to proceed more mindfully and ethically into the future.

Bio

Katrina Sark is an associate professor of fashion studies in the Department of Media, Design, Learning, and Cognition at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU). She specializes in cultural analysis, cultural history, media, gender studies, sustainability, and decolonization. She is the founder of the Canadian Fashion Scholars Network, the co-founder of the Urban Chic book series, with co-authored books including *Berliner Chic: A Locational History of Berlin Fashion* (2011), *Montréal Chic: A Locational History of Montreal Fashion* (2016), and *Copenhagen Chic: A Locational History of Copenhagen Fashion* (2023). She is the host of *Chic Podcast*, dedicated to fashion, design, culture, sustainability, media, and technology.

Notes

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2 Dictionary.com.
3 Woodward, "Skirts for Men."
4 Vaid-Menon, "DEGENDERING FASHION ANTI-VIOLENCE IMPERATIVE."
5 Ibid.
6 Khan, "Male Teachers Wear Skirts."
7 Vaid-Menon, "DEGENDERING FASHION ANTI-VIOLENCE IMPERATIVE."
8 Kendi. How to Be Antiracist, 12.
9 Ibid, 80.
10 Ibid, 173.
11 Ibid, 181.
12 Ibid, 188.
13 Chicago Public Library, "Anti-Racist Reading List from Ibram X. Kendi."
14 Vaid-Menon, Beyond the Gender Binary, 31.
15 Ibid, 56.
16 Statista, "Number of Netflix paid subscribers worldwide from 1st quarter 2013 to 1st quarter 2022."
17 Geczy and Karaminas, Queer Style, 3.
18 For more recent examples of adoption of these styles by Gen Z audiences, see Cary, "Street Style Copenhagen Fashion", and the streetstyle photographs from Copenhagen Fashion Week in February 2022.
19 Zotte, From Goodwill Grunge.
20 Cogan, U2: An Irish Phenomenon, 27.
21 Schippers, "Organization Sexuality Gender Rock," 760.
22 Morgan, "Emo Kid Gent," 114.
23 Geczy and Karaminas, Queer Style, 37.
24 Ibid, 38.
25 Ibid, 40.
26 Worsley, 100 Ideas That Changed Fashion, 159.
27 Ibid, 159.
28 Bhagchandani, "Jaden Smith self-expression."
29 Drag Race Wiki.
30 Harry Styles quoted in Lamont.
31 Michele quoted in Bowles.
32 Saad, Me White Supremacy, 134–137.

33 Lowe, "Stars Didn't Invent Gender Fluidity."
34 Ibid.
35 Butler, Gender Trouble, 25.
36 moore, Fabulous, 20.
37 Ibid, 29.
38 Ibid, 16.
39 Vaid-Menon, "#DEGENDERFASHION: HARRY STYLES ON THE COVER OF VOGUE."
40 Carras, "Porter not impressed by Styles."
41 Quoted in Deng, "Styles isn't leader fashion revolution."
42 Ibid.
43 Quoted in Bowenbank, "Porter Apologizes Styles Comments."
44 Talley, Chiffon Trenches.
45 Molanphy, "La Vida Loca Edición."
46 Saad, Me White Supremacy, 14.
47 Ibid, 119.
48 Ibid, 136.
49 Ibid, 143.
50 Ibid, 144–145.
51 See Sark, "The Fashion Paradox."
52 Tsjeng, "Teens Queer AF."
53 Maguire, "Gender-Neutral Store Arrived?"
54 Seward, "London Fashion Week Genderless Seasonless."
55 Instagram, #meninskirts.
56 Quoted in Lieber, "Gen Z Reimagining Masculinity."
57 Ibid.
58 Quoted in Lieber, "Gen Z Reimagining Masculinity."
59 Ibid.
60 Hills, "Styles launches gender-neutral brand."
61 Quoted in Hills, Megan C. "Styles launches gender-neutral brand."
62 Ibid.
63 Quoted in Hills, Megan C. "Styles launches gender-neutral brand."
64 Ibid.
65 Jarvis, "People calling on Federer for unpaid wages."
66 MacKinnon, Day World Stops Shopping, 103.
67 Ibid, 129.
68 Ibid, 197.
69 Ibid, 180.

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25 Queer Style

Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas

Dress practices have played an important role in queer cultures; visual codes have often been used to signify sexuality and sexual preference, whether covert or not. A lily flower worn as a *boutonnière* was most likely a sign of a sexually ambiguous identity, a signet ring indicated membership of a queer community and a colored hanky in a back pocket was the system used by gay men in the 1970s to indicate sexual preferences and fetishes. Although there have always been queer milieus in large cities, they were clandestine, with people gathering in private homes, bars, and clubs. As early as the seventeenth century in England, men who practiced sex with men were known as "mollies" who frequented Molly Houses; covert salons, coffee houses, or taverns to avoid police arrest and persecution. Some mollies wore women's clothing as a form of self-identification and to attract sexual partners. They wore "gowns, petticoat, head-cloths, fine lace shoes, furbelowed scarves, and masks. Some wore riding boots; some were dressed as milkmaids, others like shepherdesses with green hats, waistcoats, and petticoats; others had their faces patched and painted."[1] Those who more openly "experimented" with their sexuality and moved in artistic circles were considered bohemians, or libertines who embraced unconventional perspectives in life. They wore oppositional clothes to the fashions of the time to shock and mock bourgeois values of class and social order and in doing so troubled ideas of gender, beauty, and sexuality.

The Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movement marked by the Stonewall Riots in New York in 1969 catapulted same-sex identities and their alternative dress styles onto television and into the public arena. Despite the Stonewall Riots being an important event for gay and lesbian liberation, ten years earlier, in May 1959, police arrested several LGBT patrons congregating at Cooper Do-nuts, a small café located between two gay bars in Los Angeles. Considered the first queer public uprising, police raided the café and arrested butch lesbians and drag queens under the pretense of "sex perversion" because their clothes and appearance did not match the gender on their identification cards. When the word "queer" came into usage in the late 1980s, sexuality was no longer considered heterosexual or cisgender, but included a broad spectrum of sexualities and gender non-conforming identities. In mainstream fashion androgynous styles flaunted arbitrary gender rules and in the new millennium "fluid fashion" entered the everyday vernacular, following on the heels of the gender non-conforming movement. Fashion is no longer separated into menswear or womenswear; instead, it merges and crosses masculine and feminine garments, fabrics, and silhouettes.

The visibility of queer style and its merging with mainstream fashion from the nineteenth century onwards can be traced to four historical reference points. These are: the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895 which drew attention to the ostentatious styling of the aesthetes

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and the bohemians, namely the dandy and the mannish lesbian; the Stonewall Riots of 1969 with the police arrest of drag queens, butch lesbians and effeminate men broadcast on national television; the AIDS Crisis, with the first case diagnosed in 1981, which placed gay men's appearance under public scrutiny and the recent mainstreaming of the Trans liberation movement that has positioned gender nonconforming bodies in the public arena and given rise to "gender fluid" fashion. This chapter examines queer dress styles as powerful signifiers of gender identity and sexual orientation and how these styles have changed over time beginning in the nineteenth century to the millennium with the adoption of "fluid" styles.

This chapter applies historiographical methods to claim a queer history of style using source material ranging from novelistic literature, psychology, culture and gender studies. While specialist literature is always present, any rich understanding of queer style, identity and appearance draws on a rich depository of literary writing, as the development of queer identity coincides with the rise of the novel in the nineteenth century. Although queer writing dates back in the West to ancient civilizations and the first recording of alternative sexualities and love, these stories were hidden by author's pseudonyms, or by a character's gender performance, or by plot or language and speech.[2] As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (considered an early proponent of queer theory) would later note in *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), there has always been a hidden queer subtext in any reading. It was not until queer studies began to flourish in the 1980s, after the gay and lesbian liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s when the AIDs crisis caused a great deal of reflection on gay male appearance that queer style became a mode of activism and political protest.

The Dandy and the *Lionne*

If haute couture begins with Charles Frederick Worth in the middle-to-late nineteenth century, so was homosexuality "invented" in its official coinage by the Austro-Hungarian Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his *Psychopathia Sexualis* of 1886. By this time, the figure of the dandy had established itself as known social identity. The genealogy of the dandy is as easy to trace as its actual constituents are difficult to map, for it is a style of identity that is defined by elusiveness. Despite historical evidence of flamboyance and excess in the appearance of upper-class gay men, one of the first watersheds of queer style arises with the evolution of the suit and the beginning of what J. C. Flügel famously called the "great male renunciation." George Bryan "Beau" Brummel (1778–1840) is widely considered the first dandy, one known in history entirely as result of his appearance as opposed to deeds or tangible cultural legacy.[3] Having come to the acquaintance of the Prince Regent (the future George IV) as an officer in the same dragoon regiment, Brummell quickly ascended to be among his closest circle of friends, influencing their dress and manners.

The precursor to the dandy is frequently named as the macaroni. This is certainly the contention of Dominic Janes in *British Dandies*.[4] Macaronis were named after the noodles of the same name that were in fashion as result of journeying to Italy on the Grand Tour, the term used by British for their edifying trip to Continental Europe that conventionally ended in Rome. Known for their outrageously large wigs and fastidious appearance, they were also referred to as fops which carried the undertone of feckless, vain, and unusually effeminate. While, again, being a macaroni did not equate to homosexuality as it would come to be understood late in the following nineteenth century, it carried significant qualities germane to male queer style into the twentieth century. The first was a distinguishable style of dress and comportment within which gay men could express their identity. The second was the association with effeminacy and an overly attentive attitude to a tidy and kept appearance. The stereotype of gay men's identity with effeminacy would be a point of contention well into the present day. As we will continue to see, queer style is always relatable to certain markers but none of these are ever reducible in any way, no less than it is possible to essentialize elements of gender. Janes is perhaps mistaken to make too close a connection between macaronis and gay men. At the same time, certain markers of queer style would continue to be tenacious, especially excessive signs of what is more commonly associated with the feminine. This perception was coterminous with the desire to find determinate taxonomies for non-conforming sexualities in the nineteenth century when non-heterosexual people were labelled "inverts."

For Brummell's part, there is little on record of love affairs with either men or women, mainly because the biggest love affair was with himself. Brummel's influence on Prince George (later Prince Regent) and his devotees is winningly captured in the BBC television drama, *Beau Brummell: This Charming Man* (2006) in which the opening scene has Brummell (James Purefoy) enter into the Prince's (Hugh Bonneville) personal bedchamber to find him decked out in cumbersome ceremonial dress, his face covered in makeup and wearing a wig. Brummell judiciously removes all the eighteenth-century trappings, wipes off the cosmetics and instructs him in the rudiments of simple dressing and good taste. This would be a combination of an early version of the suit and riding boots with an emphasis placed on clean linen and a carefully tied cravat. This meant that men's fashion went from being largely additive to structural, with the emphasis on tailoring as opposed to finery. The opening credits of the series has Brummell donning his shirt which he purportedly did in a billowing flourish to minimize creases. Brummell turned his morning ritual into his own quasi-regal ritual morning ceremony (calling to mind Louis XIV's *lever*) in which he would often go through several shirts and would painstakingly tie and re-tie his cravat while his friends looked on.[5] Brummell is remarkable in the history of fashion for making fastidiousness of appearance into something of the equivalent of a religion.

The first major study of the dandy, devoted largely to Brummell, was by the novelist and author Jules Barbey D'Aurevilly, himself also very much a dandy. His celebrated definition of the dandy is as a figure "almost as difficult to describe as to define."[6] The dandy is liable "to come up with the unsuspected, what a mind accustomed to the yoke of rules cannot arrive at using regular logic."[7] The enigma and inscrutability of the dandy made him a figure of envy and fun, seldom ignored, which was the greatest tragedy of all. Indeed, the dandy is very much a product of modernity and of the fashion system itself, as he is someone who belonged to an elite that was of his own making, a figure whose claim to excellence was self-styled rather than externally conferred. As an exaggerated figure of fashion, the dandy was both someone who stood out from the rest while posing as something to which people should aspire. As would be expected, the difficulty in defining the dandy would result in endless attempts to do so—questing valiantly to define the indefinable—but the consensus seems to converge on him as an ironic figure who was able to embody contradiction. It would be precisely this ability for multiplicity and duplicity that allowed gay men to express themselves in and through the dandy, as a sartorial carapace and as a semantic vehicle, that was simultaneously open and closed to the "facts" at the same time.

Barbey's treatise was followed by a series of commentaries by his bohemian contemporaries, including Théophile Gautier's *De la mode* (*On Fashion*, 1858) and

Baudelaire' *Painter of Modern Life* (*Peintre de la vie Moderne*, 1863). In his eponymous entry, Baudelaire celebrates the dandy as someone "outside the law" and writes in terms of what we would now call characteristics of a performance artist: the dandy is self-consciously aware of his subjectivity.[8] He is a container for all that is surprising and possible about modernity, the opposite of a machine but a creation unto himself. While all of this may not seem especially germane to queer style, it ought to emphasize that the cult of the dandy was also a deep form of homocentrism and highly homosocial dating back to Brummell and his circle who assembled at the club "Waiter's" which Lord Byron—himself notoriously bisexual—called "The Dandy Club." The cult of masculinity inevitably blended into homosexual activity which was already a commonplace in British all-male schools. The men's clubs were an extension of same-sex schools while the Brummellian attire with its faun trousers, immaculate cravats and short hair in the Grecian style (*à la grecque*) were all part of a pseudo-sacred sartorial society which was based on acumen of performance and appearance.

While scholars such as Olga Vainshtein[9] and Elizabeth Wilson[10] have argued the perdurance of the dandy and the bohemian into contemporary times, dandy identity reached a critical climax when Oscar Wilde recklessly went to trial for "gross indecency" in 1895, which was as much if not more a trial of homosexuality itself. Up until this time Wilde's homosexuality had been known but conveniently overlooked. Since his university years, Wilde had always been something of a sartorial pageant with his kind of style described by his biographer, Richard Ellmann, as "bizarre dandyism."[11] While Brummell had mandated restraint, Wilde's code of dress was regularly extreme, intentionally flouting convention with wide fur collars, rich silks and brightly-colored velvets or styles, suggesting that he was always in various stages of dress-up. Wilde's son, Vivian Holland recounts how he made his entrée into London after his studies in Oxford. As a self-anointed "Apostle of Aestheticism" he set out to blight the rigidity of conventional British middle-class deportment. "The sight of him in the evening in a velvet coat edged with braid, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, a soft loose shirt with a wide turn-down collar and a large flowing tie, was bound to arouse indignant curiosity."[12] He used a trip to Umbria as an opportunity to wear an outlandish pair of "Trasimo" trousers. Wilde's commitment making brash, florid historical references in his dress bordered on obsessive. For instance, when he began to adopt pins and rings, he remarked that he was "paying homage to the eighteenth-century dandies."[13]

Ed Cohen makes a detailed analysis of Wilde's propensity for "posing," in which manner and deportment were used as devices of auto-aestheticization. Posing, as Cohen describes it was for Wilde "an attitude or posture of the body, or a part of the body, especially one deliberately assumed, or in which a figure is placed for effect, or for artistic purposes."[14] Before the coinage of "camp," posing goes a long way to determining the forms affectation that hallmark queer style in general and is again another tangible index of its commitment to artifice. While a greater degree of tolerance persisted on the continent, notably in France, in Edwardian Britain "deviant" behavior was taboo. This is when all unusual styles and appearances began to be lumped into one undesirable basket, when "dandy" and "bohemian" were pejoratives and used euphemistically for homosexual. In his last years, Wilde understandably abandoned the provocations of his pre-prison years but maintained a distinctive poise. As the Symbolist writer André Fontainas recalls: "Always elegant of bearing, a blooming flower in his button hole, holding forth with paradoxes, slow and fluent, spiritual and composed, a trifle mannered and graceful in his contrivances and repartees, he was always disposed to an audience …"[15] Wearing a conspicuous and unusual flower in the button-hole was a familiar residue of the dandies and aesthetes—Wilde had immortalized the lily—and it continued to be a familiar signaling device until the outbreak of the World War I.

The legacy of Wilde has several strands. It allowed male gay style to claim something like an autonomous space, allowing gay male identity a more rounded personality and social persona. While dandyism would persist well into the twentieth century in its many indefinable identities, gay and non-gay, there were increasingly a set of performances that were no longer isolated or fragmented but which aggregated into a discernible sensibility. It embraced excess, wastage and self-consciousness, eschewing naturalness—all that was anathema to the heterosexual counterpart. It will be remembered that in Barbey's description of the dandy he foregrounds vanity as a singular trait, one that had been traditionally ascribed to women. The dandy was imbued with a cool haughtiness that rivalled that of the sexually unavailable woman, it was a self-absorption that was had an aggressively male caste.[16] In many ways the dandy's auto-eroticism, which indeed meant that men could identify as gay but not necessarily engage in carnal acts *per se*, was the ultimate form of homosexuality, as it converged into a self-satisfied solipsism.

While it remains highly contentious that there is such thing as a female dandy, perhaps the closest counterpart is that of the "lioness" or *lionne*. She became a distinctive identity in the middle of the nineteenth century following the July monarchy. The *lionne* was in many ways a reaction to the supplicant image of wilting femininity that had become popularized by narratives such as the novel by Alexandre Dumas *fils*, *La Dame aux camélias* (1848) and which was adapted into Verdi's opera *La Traviata*. Unlike the fashionable celebrity-driven *femme à la mode*, who calculated her dress and appearance very carefully at outings and events, the lioness was interested more in sporting pursuits than celebrity and was associated with physical vitality. Miranda Gill notes that the lioness appropriated male physiological norms, or "surrogate masculinity" and was considered an "eccentric" character that possessed a voracious sexual appetite.[17] She ate, drank, and smoked without the conventional proprietorial restraint and participated in masculine-associated activities such as horse riding, pigeon shooting, and swimming. Despite her "masculine" qualities, she was portrayed in illustrations as attractive and fashionable and was often depicted in the company of dandies.

> [They were] indefatigable amazons, spurning the peaceful recreations of their sex, and abdicating the gentle influence of their discrete charms to follow our dandies to the [horse] races and join in the large and small-scale schemings of the Jockey's Club; queens of the equestrian world, who have been dubbed "the lionnes" in recognition of the strength, intrepidity, and inexhaustible ardour which they daily evince.[18]

In a fashion plate illustration (Figure 25.1), a *lionne* is depicted as wearing a dressing gown; an item of clothing that was regulated to masculine evening wear and, as Gill states, "one of the few refuges of ancient regime luxury and 'feminine' caprice in nineteenth century male clothing."[19]

The French bohemian writer George Sand (Amandine Lucile Aurore Dupin) writing during the 1830s and 1840s described the rebellious heroines in her novels as lionesses and often modeled herself on the lioness' mannish ways. Sand cross-dressed, ate copious amounts of chocolate, smoked profusely, and mixed in the company of men in public. She was barely five feet-tall and her biographer Elizabeth Harlan writes that she had the stamina and strength of an Olympic athlete regardless of her size and sex.[20]

Figure 25.1 Illustration of woman wearing long coat, entitled "la lionne." Fashion plate. Les Francçais peints par eux-mêmes. Paris, France 1853–59. British Library Board. Alamy.

> She rode horseback hard and fast across vast stretches of French countryside and hiked high into the mountains of France and Switzerland. By nineteenth-century standards, she travelled and extensively frequently … . and when she was well] into her seventies she bathed in the Indre River.

Sand would frequently appear in public wearing a masculine suit, or a banyan-type robe, normally reserved for the interior, and Turkish slippers with their curved, pointed toes. When the French novelist Honoré de Balzac paid a visit to Sand at her château at Nohant, he described his encounter with her in masculine metaphors and spoke of her as though they were male equals.

> I [arrived] at about half-past seven in the evening and found comrade George Sand in her dressing gown, smoking an after-dinner cigar at the fireplace of an enormous, lonely bedroom. She was wearing a pair of pretty, fringed yellow slippers, coquettish stockings and red trousers … . With a seriousness, sincerity, candor and conscientiousness worthy of the "great shepherds" who guide the flocks of men, we discussed the great problems of marriage and freedom … .[21]

There has been much speculation for the reasons why Sand chose to dress in men's attire. As we wrote in *Queer Style* (2013), before the latter half of the twentieth-century queers lived clandestine lives and alternative societies were mostly underground. Women passed as men by dressing and acting as men for either sexual or economic reasons, or simply for adventure.[22] Ulrich Lehmann argues that Sand dressed as a man solely for economic reasons and as a way of earning an income as a journalist and a writer, much as her contemporary—who shared an uncannily similar *nom de plume*—Mary Ann Evans who was compelled to change her name to George Eliot. Susan L. Seigfried and John Finkelberg describe Sand as an "unusual figure" who readily adopted masculine attire to forge a literary career.[23] She even designed and made her own suit to pass as a man to mingle in literary circles that were restricted to men. Her male friends included some of the most eminent writers of the nineteenth century, including Gustave Flaubert, Balzac, Émile Zola, François-René de Chateaubriand, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Henry James. She even went so far as to design a grey suit which she made to measure her diminutive size. It was illegal in France for women to wear trousers and was forbidden under the 16 Brumaire IX Act promulgated by Napoleon on November 7, 1800, as a way of controlling their behavior and to stop women claiming male privilege (the right to vote, own property and enter legal contracts). An exception to cross dressing could be made if candidates lodged a valid medical certificate with their application. If the application was approved a "*permis de travestissement*" [transvestite's permit] would be granted for six months and thereafter was renewable. It was only during times of carnival when social rules were permitted to be transgressed that the law was suspended. But otherwise, cross dressing in public spaces (including balls) was prohibited by Article 471, Section 15 of the Penal Code of 1853.[24]

In the second halve of the nineteenth century, sexual identity was not as restricted (or policed) which opened the way to more open visibility of sexualities such as lesbians, homosexuals and transgender. It was the age that brought sex out into the open.[25] These sexualities were considered "inverts" and referred to as *the third sex*. In 1867, Gustave Flaubert posed the following question in a letter to George Sand: "What is your view on women then, you who are the third sex?"[26] He received no reply. This shift in perception begins to be played out in sartorial codes and crossdressing became a common *leitmotiv* for women writers in the turn of the century, including the decadent novelist Rachilde (Marguerite Vallette-Eymery) who applied for a *permis de travestissement* to wear trousers in 1884. Melanie Hawthorn argues that Rachilde, like Sand, presented herself as a man to publish her work.[27] Like Sand and Rachilde, the French fin de siècle novelist Collette, often dressed in men's clothes and would be seen in public with her first husband, the unscrupulous literary entrepreneur Henry Gauthier-Villars, in the company of lesbians, bisexual courtesans, sadists, masochists and crossdressers.[28] It was on one of these outings that Colette met the aristocrat and artist Mathilde de Mornay, or Missy with whom she would have a long-term relationship (Figure 25.2) Missy, or Uncle Max, dressed extravagantly in men's wear and lived as a man. Missy wore his hair cropped, ordered his suits from tailors on Saville Row, and even sent his shirts to be pressed and ironed in London. In *Sisters of Salome*, Toni Bentley writes that Mathilda

> comported [himself] as a man, padding out [his]small feet with socks to fit [his] men's shoes, wearing overalls and three-piece suits, a short haircut, and a rounded centre that betrayed no breasts. [He] even tried making herself [himself] a moustache from [his] poodle's tale.[29]

The Early Twentieth Century

If potentialities for queer style were curtailed in Britain, they nonetheless persisted in telltale signs that were also traceable to heterosexuals: pinkie signet rings, bright vests, sharp coiffures and fetishized accessories such as engraved cigarette cases and bejeweled tie-clasps. In more permissive France, signs of alterity were not as limited to the privileged classes but were increasingly allied to artistic and avant-garde circles for whom outré behavior was encouraged as part of alternative and experimental lifestyles.

The fashions of the 1920s were marked by an emphasis on simplicity for greater movement and maneuverability. This also meant that inflections of eccentricity could be more evident. But for those who could afford it, gay men's style continued to cherish the devil in the detail such as expensive cufflinks, a fine-cut suit with just enough evidence to show that it was hand-sewn. Lesbian style in the 1920s was dominated by men's formal attire, top-hats and tails, popularized by Hollywood actresses Marlene Dietrich and Judy Garland. Remarking on Dietrich's dragging, a magazine in 1933 carried the headline "Marlene Sets Trouser Fashion" where readers were informed that she had ten suits which she wore all around Hollywood.[30] Upper class lesbians and gender non-conformists that were financially independent such as Radcliff Hall, author of *The Well of Loneliness* (1928),[31] Mathilde "Max" de Mornay (Marquise de Belboeuf) and the artist Romain Brooks wore clothes that were in part an extension of the dandy. They dressed in tuxedos and cravats in public, smoked a cigarette or a cigar and often wore a monocle and wore their hair in an Eton crop. Women belonging to the lower classes only wore mannish clothes in the evening concealed under a coat on their way to a lesbian venue. High and low, these women, lesbian and otherwise, were now characterized as the "New Woman" (also the "Modern Girl" and the "Masculine Woman") whose penchant for flouting inhibitions were tied up with the bloomerites and the suffragettes. The choice of alternative, less-than-feminine clothing was caught up in the clamor for liberation and equal rights. As Janes observes, the sartorial exploits of such women were not quite a matter of dragging or cross-dressing but more of "gender stretching": "These women did not become women. They stretched what

Figure 25.2 Colette and Mathilde "Max" de Mornay. Unknown source. Public Domain.

a woman could be."[32] In many ways, they laid the basis for the destigmatization of unisex dress, such as jeans that we have today.

A cultural and social presence of self-fashioning lesbians began to emerge in Europe and the United States in the 1920s in urban metropolises such as Paris, Berlin, and Harlem and Greenwich Village in New York. Paris was the center of sexual freedom and American and European expatriate lesbians joined with French artists and writers to form cultural milieus. Lesbians gathered at *Le Chat Noir* (The Black Cat) cabaret and *Le Monocle* bar made famous by Brassaï's (Gyula Halásc) black and white photographs of femme-butch couplings. Femmes wore bright red lipstick, dresses that that hung loosely on their hips and hair that bobbed just below their ears. Masculine *garçonnes* dressed in stiff white shirts, black tuxedos and wore their hair in the style of a Roman emperor or Joan of Arc. The wealthy (and notorious) American playwright, poet and novelist Natalie Clifford Barney established a salon that became a lesbian hub, attracting a coterie of artists and literati, including Radcliff Hall, Colette and Mathilde "Max" de Mornay amongst others.

Queer styling in Berlin after the World War I was rife. In a country that was confused by what they believed was a phony defeat and humiliating peace terms, throwing many social structures into disarray meant that identities, guises, and poses were more than just an individual choice but an expression of collective ennui. Exacerbated by the hyperinflation of the early 1920s, that saw the fortunes of most of the middle class in tatters, the once strict mores were breached by all manner of expressions of disaffection, dissent, and deviance. As Richard Dyer remarks, Berlin at this time was a melting-pot for drag which began to morph into particular styles and looks, including the "Belladonna" which deeply darkened eyes mimicking the femmes fatales popularized by pre-sound cinema such as the alluring dominatrix of Theda Bara's (an anagram of "Arab Death") portrayal of Cleopatra.[33] Berlin's vibrant lesbian community included clubs, bars, balls and two prominent publications, *Die Freudin* (The Girlfriend) and *Garçonne*.

Across the Atlantic in New York, Greenwich Village and Harlem were transgressive enclaves that attracted subversive crowds. To white American's Harlem was a free-for-all party and many women frequented the many nightclubs and bars to partake in sexual experiences with other men and women known as "slumming." During the Harlem Renaissance (1920–35), African American lesbians gathered and socialised at rent parties[34] and cabarets. The most popular lesbian venue was The Clam House which presented live stage acts and drag performers. The mannish "bull-dyke" impresario Glady Bentley and Ma Rainey often performed at the club dressed in a tuxedo and top hat. "Freak parties" or masquerade parties popular as forms of entertainment in Europe since the eighteenth century, enjoyed a revival amongst lesbians and queer men during the 1920s and 1930s. Such parties were characterized by burlesque performances and crossdressing and by 1945 shows featured butch "crooners" and drag queens dressed in sequinned gowns, glamorous wigs and feather headdresses.[35] Like Paris and Berlin, lesbian venues were zones where sartorial display indicated sexual tastes and preferences and where one could explore same sex desire.

After the Two World Wars

No doubt the many horrors of World War II played a significant role in gay men wanting to address stereotypes about them as being effeminate "pansies." This meant that men of the latter part of the twentieth century went to great lengths to reclaiming masculinity for themselves which meant overturning the connotations of femininity. One citable example of this in the early postwar years was Jean Genet who was fêted as a major writer and cultural figure, not to mention a gay archetype. Once a successful writer, Genet spurned affect and finery, dressing plainly and usually maintaining links to his underbelly origins: he would frequently pose with his collared shirt with sleeves rolled up beyond the elbow and holding his cigarette in the more uncouth workmanly manner of between finger and thumb.[36]

Genet drew considerable cachet from his shady origins as street fighter and petty thief and his subsequent incarceration, always displaying himself as the universal tough-guy. His *Our Lady of Flowers* (1944) brought the idea of the butch queen into the mainstream while the dominant intellectual of the day, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote a massive, if occasionally dubious (contending that homosexuality was a matter of personal choice) treatise on him (*Saint Genet. Comédien et martyr*, 1952), proclaiming him as the new hero of twentieth century letters.[37] Genet turned his life experiences into the novel, *Querelle de Brest* (1947) whose main character the young bisexual sailor Georges Querelle who is a thief and a murderer is based on Genet himself.[38] Set in the French port town of Brest, the novel involves sadism, predatory murder, and masochistic submission as Querelle manipulates and kills his lovers for thrills and profit. The novel resonates with the gay culture of promiscuity and cruising that courts with the risk of being discovered and the implication that the sexual encounter was rough and illicit. The sailor becomes a cipher for ephemerality (the itinerant traveller) and danger (military strength) the archetype of the ephemeral sexual being that was later explored in the illustrations of Tom of Finland (Touko Valio Laaksonen). Images of sailors with tight uniforms that exaggerated their crotch, bulging muscles and pectorals were depicted in scenes of group sex in erotic settings like a galley of a ship or the cubicle of a men's toilet. The illustrations exploit hegemonic codes of masculinity by drawing attention to the desiring homosexual body and the sexual act as one of empowerment.

Disenfranchised gay men returning from the war hungry for the danger and excitement of military combat were attracted to the masculine bonds and romanticized image of the "bad boy" motorcycle clubs that were gaining popularity since the screening of *The Wild One* (1955, dir. Làzló Benedek) starring Marlon Brando. Members of such clubs, for example the Satyrs, happily cultivated the machismo style of heterosexual heroes like Brando. Bikers wore motorcycle boots, black leather jackets, leather peaked caps and white tee shirts. They carried chained leather wallets tucked into the back pockets of their blue jeans worn under their black leather chaps. It was not until the 1970s that biker culture became more widespread amongst gays and lesbians as part of the leather bondage and sado-masochist club scene (BDSM). Leather dykes would experience discrimination from feminists in the early 1980s over debates about sexual expression that culminated into the lesbian "Sex Wars."[39] Lesbian sexual practices such as sado-masochism, butch and femme identities and female-to-male transmen were denounced by feminists as male-identified or coerced by patriarchal thinking, arguing that all sexuality must be between consenting partners with equal power.

In London in the 1950s, some areas of display were beginning to open up that catered to gay men's tastes. One such place was Vince Man's Shop in a small back street in Soho owned by Bill Green. Green had an earlier career as a physique photographer and became more interested in men's fashion after a trip to France where he was stuck by the men in black shirts, jeans, and the way that clothes were used as much to show off the body as cover it. It is often regarded as the first all-male boutique store which sold garments designed and made by Green with sleek and provocative look that appealed to a largely gay clientele.[40] Not only did Green not hold back in his choice of colors but he is also credited with using pre-faded denim. He also ensured that his clients were able to display their manliness, favoring tight cut over flamboyance or flow, the "Torso Shirt," a tight-fitting, muscle-hugging T-shirt was a quick favorite.

The most visible sign of lesbianism in the 1950s was the appearance of the butch—or stud lesbian—with her short hair stylised into a "duck's arse," men's tailored suit or blue jeans, loafers, or sneakers. She held doors and lit cigarettes for femme women and paid the bill when on a date. Her wardrobe consisted of chino pants and western shirts and penny loafers with argyle socks. Tuxedos and ties were popular for evening wear, as were low cut men's dress boots. Butch lesbians or "diesel dykes" as they came to be known, modeled their mannerisms and attitudes on Hollywood stars and rock "n" roll heart throbs such as Elvis Presley, James Dean, and Marlon Brando. Femmes wore tight dresses and skirts with matching cardigans known as "twin-sets" (rarely pants) and panty hose with high-heeled shoes.

Feminism, Sexual Liberation, and F***king with Gender

For politicized lesbians in the 1960s and 1970s, dress style was essentially androgynous or anti-fashion. Feminist lesbians considered mainstream fashion and beauty as catering to the whims of men, so they rejected cosmetic products such as lipstick and nail polish and wore comfortable loose fitting clothes such as flannel shirts and pants as well as loose jackets. Hair was cut short and footwear consisted either of tennis shoes, Birkenstock sandals, or Fry boots, in other words anything connoting feminine heels was definitely out. This was a sartorial statement about not dressing for men. It was that look that became a "uniform" and a way for lesbians to identify one another in solidarity. To lesbian feminists this was a style that spoke about identity and belonging to the sisterhood and to women's liberation. Many feminists lesbians rejected the strictly coded butch-femme culture of the 1920s, 1940s, and 1950s because they were seen to mimic the repressive male-female binary of patriarchal society. The butch style of dressing, including hairstyles and mannerisms such as holding a cigarette with thumb and index finger were seen as aspiring to "maleness." As Alix Genter explains: "Butches not only challenged normative conceptions of gender and claimed lesbian space, they also defiantly announced their queerness through their looks."[41] When the Stonewall Inn riots occurred in 1969 on Christopher Street in New York, an important event in the LGBT liberation movement, it was the butches that were arrested (and the drag queens) because their dress styles made them visible.

Images of masculine virility were further appropriated by gay men in the 1960s and 1970s in the stylized hypermasculine "clone" or "muscle Mary" to counter dominant cultural assumptions that gay men were effeminate. The act of dressing up perpetuates the performative aspect of gender, as a subversive bodily act that can be used as a powerful tool of resistance. The adoption of masculine-encoded clothing—denim jeans, plaid shirts worn over white t-shirts, construction boots and army fatigues worn tight to emphasize genitalia and musculature—presented a new macho image of erotic virility. The clone grew out of a more celebratory bent in gay culture precipitated by the sexual revolution after which queer identities, male and female were more inclined toward carnivalesque, theatrical displays that amplified the ways in which discrete social identities could be manipulated and redeployed. Hypermasculine identities proliferated after

Stonewall, the diesel dyke and the clone used stylized masculine dress to subvert hegemonic power and claim their identities in a social and political space. In 1979, the Radical Fairies rejected hypermasculinity and its association with gay urban culture and instead embraced their femininity through drag practices. They subverted macho gay masculinity by dressing up in feminine clothes but maintained their body hair, beards and genital bulge, creating a sense of gender confusion. Like the Fairies, who rejected urban culture by gathering in rural settings, the Bears strove to embody a particular representation of gay masculinity that drew on icons of working class country men, particularly the lumberjack. Rejecting smooth skinned and slim bodies for heavy set "chubby" silhouettes, they maintained beards, wore jeans and boots and braces over their plaid shirts instead of leather belts. As Shaun Cole states, "[i]n 'passing' as straight to outside observers, but embracing their homosexuality, Bears challenged the perception of what a gay man looks like."[42]

The celebratory culture of queer expression was jolted by the AIDS epidemic that commenced in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere in the early 1980s. The loss of lives and the stigmatization of gay men gave vent to some of the most explosive political opposition and creative forces of the decade. The blurring of gender and sexual boundaries had become prevalent across a range of entertainment media, from fashion catwalks to pop music. This gender-bending was particularly evident among musicians such as Boy George whose dress style of kaftans, nail polish, eyeshadow and heavy eyeliner was counter-sexual and androgynous. Young lesbians began to reconceptualize role playing and the stylistic cues that accompany gender identities to challenge dominant mainstream culture. The resurgence of butch-femme identities was marked by cross dressing, gender switching and gendered role playing, as they translated this look into a style with belted high-waisted stone wash jeans, white T-shirts with rolled up sleeves, and black Dr Martens boots. A "mullet" or "sho-lo" was popular amongst butch lesbians with the sides and top cropped or buzzed short while the hair at the back of the head remained long, at times plaiting the hair strands into a long, skinny "rat's tail."[43]

Kinging, Voguing, and Lipsticks

The "Sex Wars" of the 1980s marked the end of second-wave feminism and gave rise in the 1990s to third-wave feminism and queer theory which argues that gender is socially constructed rather than a naturally given or essential category. Lesbians began to use gender paradigms as a way of deploying power and decentring dominant models of femininity and masculinity. Crossdressing, or "kinging" performances in the lesbian club circuit became a way of performing queerness, that exposed the artificiality and instability of gender by using props (suits, ties, crotch stuffers, greased hair, moustaches, and beards), role-playing, and mimicry. Drag kings perform a taxonomy of masculinities from the Latinx lover strutting his machismo, the "white trash trucker," the "suave gentleman," and the "professional boxer." Such cross-ethnic performance drew attention to race as a signifier of Otherness and marginality produced by racial discourses. Lesbian's used "kinging" "as a way of traversing and breaking the gender system and its codes, and about opening a space were masculinities and femininities are redefined producing new erotics, new genders and new modes of power."[44]

Meanwhile, in Harlem, New York, African American and Latinx transwomen and gay men were gathering together at balls in "Houses" to compete against each other for "realness" in "walks." Ball culture had its roots in the beginning of the nineteenth century when the LGBT community began organizing cross dressing masquerade balls in opposition to laws that banned wearing clothes associated with the opposite gender or against the banning and racial vilification of African American and Latinx performers. Participants performed in categories such as Butch Queen Realness, or Realness with a Twist and belonged to "family" groups known as Houses (much like fashion houses) with whom they formed relationships, lived, and performed together. There was the legendary Houses of LaBeija and Ninja, the House of Xtravaganza, and the house of Ladocha amongst many others. Dressed as supermodels in DIY fashions resembling haute couture creations, they strutted down the catwalk, dipping, popping and spinning, lip syncing and stopping midway to "strut a pose" that became known as "Vogueing." Three consecutive events occurred that ushered the Drag Ball scene from a countercultural event into a major fashion and musical style. Beginning in 1989 was the first AIDS fundraiser Love Ball judged by American *Vogue* magazine's editor-at-large André Leon Talley and supermodel Iman. This was followed by the release of Jenny Livingstone's *Paris is Burning* (1990), a documentary film that explored the elaborately structured balls and their performers. Then in 1990, American singer-songwriter Madonna's hit single "Vogue" toped the billboard charts around the world and tipped over into the zeitgeist.[45]

Although Madonna was straight, she was sexually assertive and used signifiers and codes that appealed to a lesbian audience. When "Express Yourself" was released in 1989, Madonna wore a 1930s-style pin-striped men's suit designed by Jean Paul Gaultier on top of a pink satin corset with embellished cone breast cups. Suspenders hung down the sides of her trousers as though she was caught in the midst of disrobing. As the fog cleared on the stage Madonna peered through her monocle and asked the audience, "Do you believe in love? Well, I've got something to say about it." She then gyrated, thrust her hips, and kissed her female backup singers. Dressed as an androgynous butch, Madonna sang of freedom to love whomever you desired. The song became a lesbian anthem. Three years later, when the openly erotic single "Justify my Love" (1993) was released, a song that celebrated polymorphous and transgressive sexuality, Madonna was a lesbian icon.

By the mid-1990s, lesbian sexuality began to break free from the butch-femme binary and women began to explore the boundaries of representation of mainstream culture. The 1990s was a decade of lesbian visibility and commodification by mainstream entertainment media. Once considered unstylish and mannish, the lesbian became sexually confident and erotically charged as images of powerful lesbian's began to filter into popular culture. American singer-songwriter Melissa Etheridge, who began performing in lesbian venues in the 1980s "came out" to the public in 1993 in the lyrics of her debut single "Bring Me Some Water" (1988) from her self-titled Grammy award winning album. The same year Canadian country singer-song writer k.d. lang (Katherine Dawn Lang) appeared on the cover of the August issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine with supermodel (and straight) Cindy Crawford. Lang was dressed in a three-piece pin-striped suit, tie, and brogues, sitting on a traditional barbers' chair whilst being shaved by Crawford, who was wearing a maillot. Then, in what is considered to be a historic moment in television (and queer) history, the American comedian Ellen DeGeneres "came out" publicly as a lesbian. By the time Showtime's *The L Word* debuted in 2004, the lesbian had become a mediated and commodified identity and the butch and femme binary had begun to blur. The characters in the *L Word* were ambitious professionals with successful careers who dressed stylishly in designer labels, lived in designer homes, wore makeup and hung out with their fashionable lesbian friends at bars, cafes and restaurants. The butch lesbian, associated in the cultural imagination with the *idea* of lesbianism, was diluted or feminized. Instead, the lesbians in the *L Word* were "straightened out" and normalized in order to become more palatable to heterosexual audiences. The fashion and media industry placed lesbian identity on the mainstream cultural landscape and produced a particular lesbian representation as professional middle class and upwardly mobile while erasing others. As the "lipstick lesbian" began gaining currency as an identity category, lipstick lesbians become chic.

Gender Non-Conforming "Fluid" Style

Meanwhile, the increasing visibility of the Trans* liberation[46] movement was becoming exceedingly vocal and gaining momentum in the media ever since *TIME* magazine featured African-American transgender actress Laverne Cox on the cover in a story titled "The Transgender Tipping Point. America's Next Civil Rights Frontier" (2014) dressed in a midnight blue off-the shoulder sheath dress. Cox, best known for her role as Sophia Burset in the Netflix series *Orange is the New Black* told *TIME,* "We are in a place now, where more and more trans people want to come forward and say, 'this is who I am … . I stand before you this evening."[47] The following year, Caitlyn Jenner was photographed by Annie Leibovitz for *Vanity Fair* magazine, wearing a white silk bodice, for the cover story "Call me Caitlyn" (2015). Soon, other transgender celebrities followed, going public with their transition stories. In a *Vogue* article on how fashion was leading the way on the mainstreaming of transgender, Maya Singer asked whether "blurred gender lines were the latest cultural fixation."[48] Transgender models Hari Nef, Lea T, Casey Leglar, and Andreja Pejic walked runways and fronted fashion advertising campaigns while fashion brands Hood by Air, Eckhaus Latta, and JW Anderson feigned little interest in male and female as meaningful categories, designing collections that blurred gender lines: suits for women, Pussy bow blouses, and dresses for men by Yves St Laurent and Gucci, and there are plenty more examples.

The ability to *choose* a garment regardless of its association with a gender is creating new ways of expressing and exploring subjectivities that are not limited to clothes or bodies associated or oriented toward specific gender norms. By mixing gender signifiers and citations embedded in the design and manufacture of womenswear and menswear "fluid" fashion draws attention to the instability of gender. Much like how anti-fashion, or "confrontational"[49] and "oppositional"[50] clothing is a semiotic system of resistance and dissent that is deployed against what is considered normative and dominant. Whilst unisex or androgynous fashion may challenge constructions of masculinity and femininity, the gender dichotomy remains fixed, whereas the goal of fluid fashion is to dilute and dissolve gender differences altogether. Various strategies are deployed by designers of fluid fashion to achieve this goal, including combining womenswear and menswear and casting a broader range of genders with different body shapes and sizes in their catwalk shows. The use of block patterns to produce garments with non-gender specific silhouettes that are proportional to a person's style and body by reworking the sizing chart and by using zippers, stretch fabrics, and draw strings.

There is no doubt at all that fashion has traditionally been a staunch supporter of gender binaries, establishing a vast industry predicated on the sale of womenswear and menswear, effectively locking traditional notions of gender firmly within their prison. As Trans* visibility is becoming more prominent across media platforms and as more as LGBTQIA+[51] people are coming forward as gender non-conforming, the fashion industry is recognizing the influence and buying power that the queer, non-conforming movement possesses. We already know that fashion takes sociopolitical movements and gives them visual currency by placing them on the catwalk, in fashion editorials and in brand campaigns then transmits them across transmedia platforms. The power wielded by the fashion system draws attention and makes a noise that enables change.

In surveying the development of queer style in Western cultures, there are two clearly defined trajectories. The first is its assertion as an ontology and a form of expression that was distinctive from heteronormative values and expectations. This occurs gradually in early modernity and can be more decisively located in the eighteenth century with the rise of middle class values—which were more rigid than those of the aristocracy—and the Enlightenment subjectivity, which allowed greater levereage for independent thought and appearance. At first queer identities needed to be hidden under encoded social manifestations that were themselves not "autonomously" queer as we might understand them today (the macaroni, the dandy), and they would eventuate into more clearly and proudly articulated forms of appearance such as the gay clones of the 1970s. But it was also these more clearly defined modes of identifiable queer identities that highlights the second trajectory which was precisely to rebel against clear definition, clichés, and stereotypes, most commonly that of queerness as characterized by hallmarkings of the opposite gender (femininity for gay men, mannishness for lesbians, for example). This "unwillingness" to adhere as we put it in out conclusion to *Queer Style* (2013) is the most most compelling and illusive aspect of queer identity and appearance. Queer visibility in the new millennium is largely due to the embodiment of resistance that renders traditional norms of style and behaviour sclerotic and anachronistic.

The gender and sexual polarities that we have inherited since the nineteenth century means that we inhabit a deeply stratified and aestheticized world. Constantly jostling subject positions to find a comfortable place to inhabit, albeit for a time being, until the time comes to move on. Traveling through these transitory and contested spaces with only the clothes on our backs; a colored hanky in our back pocket, a signet ring on our finger, or a lily flower worn as a *boutonnière*. Clandestine dress codes that once announced who we were and what we liked, where historically queer identity had been hidden in smoky bars or salons encrypted under the dandy, the clone, the mannish or lipstick lesbian, sexualities (and genders) are now virtually indistinguishable. Above all, more than anything else, queer style reveals the changing practices of dress and clothing in staking our claim to who we are, and who we are not in this world.

Notes

1 Trumbach, *The Birth of the Queen*, 138.
2 See Robert Aldrich Gay Life and Culture. A World History, London: Thames and Hudson, 2006.
3 See Ian Kelly, *Beau Brummel: The Ultimate Dandy*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2005.
4 Janes, *British Dandies*, 2022.
5 *Beau Brummell: This Charming Man*, dir. Philippa Lowthorpe, BBC4, 2006.
6 Barbey D'Aurevilly, *Du Dandisme et de George Brummel*, 31.
7 Ibid., 34.
8 Baudelaire, "Le Dandy," *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*, 906–9.
9 Vainshtein, *Fashioning the Dandy*.
10 Wilson, *Bohemians: Glamorous Outcasts*, 2000.
11 Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, 38.
12 Holland, "Introduction", Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 9–10.

13 Schaffer, "Fashioning Aestheticism by Aestheticizing Fashion: Wilde, Beerbohm, and the Male Aesthetes' Sartorial Codes," 45.
14 Cohen, "Posing the Question. Wilde, Wit and the Ways of Man," 39.
15 Fontainas, *Mes souvenirs du Symbolisme*, 173.
16 D'Aurevilly, *Du Dandisme*, 21ff. In the words of Jessica Feldman, "Barbey likens Brummell to coquettes, courtesans, and muses. Women never forgive him for being as graceful as they. His vocation is to please: the Prince of Wales's courtship of Brummell is as simple as the conquest of woman. Even the dandy's characteristic aggressive coldness, his defining aloofness from women, it itself a female characteristic." *Gender on the Divide*, 87–8.
17 Gill, *Eccentricity and the Cultural Imagination in Nineteenth Century Paris,* 87.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid, 89.
20 Harlan, *George Sand,* XIV.
21 Barry, "George Sand was at Home to Life, Work and Love at Nohant," *New York Times*, 1972.
22 Geczy and Karaminas, *Queer Style,* 23.
23 Siegfried and Finkelberg, "Fashion in the Life of George Sand," *Fashion Theory*, 2020.
24 Hawthorne, *Rachilde and French Women's Authorship*, 109.
25 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* I, 1978.
26 Lehmann, "Modernism Versus Feminism," 79.
27 Hawthorn, *Rachilde and French Women's Authorship,* 109.
28 Geczy and Karaminas, *Libertine Fashion. Sexual Freedom, Rebellion and Style*, 99.
29 Ibid., 145.
30 Janes, *British Dandies*, 119.
31 *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) was a lesbian novel written by Radcliffe Hall that follows the life of Stephen Gordon, an English woman belonging to a wealthy English family that suffers from "sexual inversion." The novel was banned on publication under obscenity laws and was republished in 1959.
32 Janes, *The British Dandy*, 120.
33 Dyer, *The Culture of Queer*, 65–6.
34 Rent parties were popular during the 1920s as a way of paying the weekly rent. Tenants would hire a musician or band and pass the hat around the crowd for donations towards the rent.
35 See "Lesbian Style', in Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas, Queer Style, London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2013.
36 See Edmund White, *Genet: A Biography*, New York: Knopf, 1993.
37 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Comédien et martyr*, Paris: NRF, 1952.
38 Jean Genet, *Querelle de Brest*, Paris: Marc Barbezat-Arbalète, 1947.
39 Vicki Karaminas, 'Born this Way. Lesbian Style Since the 80 s,' A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk, edited by Valerie Steele, London and New Haven: Yale University Press.
40 Shaun Cole, *Don We Now our Gay Apparel*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000, 72–4.
41 Genter, "Appearances Can be Deceiving: Butch-Femme Fashion and Queer Legibility in New York City, 1945–69," *Feminist Studies,* 604.
42 Shaun Cole,"Queerily Visible: Gay Men, Dress and Style 1960–2012," *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk,* edited by Valerie Steele, London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 154.
43 Vicki Karaminas, 'Born this Way. Lesbian Style Since the 80 s,' A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk, edited by Valerie Steele, London and New Haven: Yale University Press.
44 Ibid.
45 Billboard https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1990-05-25/
46 The asterisk is used in trans to include the widest range of gender variation. It denotes a movement or transition that has no final destination.
47 Steinmetz, "The Transgender Tipping Point," *Time*, May 29, 2014.
48 Singer, 'The Year in Fashion. The Transmovement Went Mainstream in 2015, and Fashion Led that Way," *Vogue*.
49 Vivienne Westwood called Punk "confrontational" dressing because of its use of swastika's, safety pins and rude tee shirts which were stylistic tools of resistance. In *Subculture the*

Meaning of Style (1979), Dick Hebdige engages with the concept of style as a form of communication, bricolage and confrontation.

50 Elizabeth Wilson uses the term oppositional dress to describe subcultural style. See Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams. Fashion and Modernity*, 1985.

51 LGBTQIA+ is used to refer to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual. The + signs refers to everyone else that is not included in the acronym.

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26 Washing Clothes

Ingun Grimstad Klepp and Kirsi Laitala

Clean and Decent

Being well dressed means having clean clothes. It does not help to have clothes for the right gender, age, and occasion, if you smell bad, or have a visible stain in the attire. Cleaning clothes is, therefore, an important part of clothing consumption together with acquisition, other maintenance, choosing the right clothes and the right combinations for different occasions. Being well-dressed depends on the dirt being removed, but dirt is, as we have learned from Mary Douglas,[1] something that is in the wrong place and deeply and profoundly cultural. The same, of course, applies to purity, pointed out by our Norwegian great cultural researcher Eilert Sundt as early as the 1860s.[2] What needs to be removed to be clean and how this has been—and is being done—is the topic of this chapter. As with other parts of clothing habits, this involves differences based on age and gender, and differences concerning types of clothing, materials, and occasions. It has also changed over the course of time and place. Keeping clothes clean involves more than removing dirt. With techniques such as pressing, ironing, and smoothing, the clothes are given the desired structure, smell, sound, etc. Cleaning and smoothing not only add the clothes the properties we want, but unfortunately also contribute to strain on the climate and the environment. The processes include water, chemicals, and energy—and the outcome is wastewater with various detergents and increasing amounts of microplastics in it. Because laundry is something we all do—and because we are so many — the cleaning of clothes is an important part of the clothes' total environmental impact. This chapter will be based on our research from Norway, where we the authors live and work, but also on knowledge of European history and global washing habits. Norway is today one of Europe's richest countries but had relatively late industrialization and modernization. Some clothing traditions in Norway differ from many other countries, such as the common use of traditional Norwegian costumes called bunad affiliated to specific places and regions,[3] the high frequency of using wool in everyday wear and the know-how on dressing appropriately for the weather,[4] as well as participation in home-based production such as knitting.[5] These lead to some differences in laundering practices, as many are knowledgeable about how to air or wash woolens, but otherwise, the laundering practices in Norway are similar to the rest of northern Europe.

Clean clothes have always been important for how people are perceived by others and in our culture they are important for our well-being and feeling safe socially. Clothes exist as a boundary between the body and the world[6] but have also been seen as protecting the surroundings from the body's impurities.[7] The function of clothes includes ensuring the body is accepted in various social situations. The absence of body odor is an

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important part of a socially acceptable body. Clothes are used to maintain this boundary both visually and from odors.[8] Cleanliness is deeply rooted in culture, religion and morality, health, hygiene, and well-being.[9] Cleaning helps to remove unwanted micro-organisms and thus prevent diseases from spreading.[10]

There has been a large shift in what it takes for clothes to be perceived as clean, in the same way as our associations towards odors have changed throughout the history.[11] The prevailing standard is freshly washed clothing. Today, bodily malodors are considered socially stigmatizing.[12] The ideal that bodies and clothes should not smell, means that people today are more concerned with smell than stains, and more concerned with preventing stains and odors that come from the body, than those that come from outside. In many contexts, stains that come from within are more taboo than stains acquired through activity from the outer environment. Clothing is protected against body fluids through the use of diapers, pantyliners, sweat pads and underwear as well as a variety of techniques and chemicals such as deodorants to prevent the smell of the body from being noticeable. The secretions from the body such as sweat, urine, dandruff, and other discharges are often considered culturally problematic[13] and clothes are a way to hide it, and laundry is a way of removing its tracks.

1800s Laundry: Seldom but Rigorous

Laundry has been an important part of housework since the late 1800s, and then mainly conducted by women.[14] Increased cleanliness was part of the modernization of society and the fight against the major infectious diseases, not least tuberculosis. From the 1850s onwards, work with the laundry underwent major changes. The laundry at this time is thoroughly documented in Norway through Eilert Sundt's book about cleaning in Norway, which was published in 1869.[15]

It was considered sufficient that clothes did not have holes and were stain-free so that they could be considered clean. Back then, stain removal, along with airing, shaking, and brushing were the most important methods of keeping clothes clean[16] and this continued into the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, it was previously common to prevent stains through the use of aprons, coats, and other protective clothing. Stains are now normally removed by washing, and stained clothes are seen as dirty clothes, but most clothes are washed long before the dirt becomes visible and even if they are not stained.

Throughout the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, there has been a connection between keeping clothes and the body clean. In the first period, whole-body washing was very rare among ordinary people in Norway, often only once or twice a year or not at all.[17] Like today, clean underwear was an absolute ideal after a full body wash. Today, full-body washing is common, most often in the form of daily showering. We thus see that the washing habits contain both slow, resilient structures such as the connection between clean body and clean clothes, while at the same time there has been a major change in the cleaning frequency.

The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by an increase in the use of textiles, compared with leather and fur, both for clothing and bedding. The colonization of America and India, with the slave trade and plantations as well as the construction of cotton cultivation there, drastically changed the production and consumption of fibers globally. Cotton became the first cheap fiber, and efficient sea transport together with the development of technology in the British cotton industry made the textiles easily accessible. This led to major changes in clothing habits with more clothes, cheaper clothes, more replacements, and above all more laundry. Many new textiles became part of the laundry basket, such as sanitary towels and diapers. The furnishings also changed character, and many new interior textiles were added. There were great social and geographical differences in the use of textiles. Textiles had been expensive investment objects of which large sections of the population had very limited supplies. A large laundry was connected to status and was a characteristic for those better off. The laundry in these homes was not washed by the housewife herself, but by hired help. The majority of the population had little laundry of their own, but could be hired to do laundry for others. The replacement of wool, linen, and other materials with cotton as the fabric of choice for clothing, laundry became a major component of women's labor in the home.[18] Since then, laundry has become something that concerns everyone, and more and more women and a larger share of men have washed increasingly more clothes.

In the 1800s, laundry was done as a seasonal task. Washing was done primarily in the spring and lasted for several days. Soaking, lye boiling, and rinsing outside in rivers and streams where there was clean water were common. Bleaching was an important part of the washing process.[19]

The 1900s: Improved Technologies and an Increase in Laundry

In the period from 1900 to 1950, many people in Norway experienced major changes in prosperity and hygiene. The amount of laundry increased steadily, with bed linen, tablecloths, curtains, underwear, aprons, and shirts as important textiles. There was a lot of washing of white and light-colored cotton. There was still little washing of clothes, except for underwear. Textiles were still a costly commodity, but laundry increased sharply, even among the broad masses of the people.[20]

Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, a lot of effort has been put into finding technical and chemical aids to make the ever-growing laundry easier. Still, the vast majority washed by hand with the old cleaning methods. The ready-made household chemicals, on the other hand, had become common and detergents were one of the first major brands often with extensive marketing.[21] Large parts of the laundry required extensive finishing work with rollers and irons. With simple aids such as buckets and washboards combined often with poor access to water, the laundry represented a substantial workload for the housewives. This washing problem was discussed by professionals and politicians. The solution was to develop the technology and make it publicly available through collective laundries, such as laundry basements in tenements.[22]

In the 1950s and 1960s, the washing machine entered the homes in Norway[23] and many other Western countries like France.[24] In both countries, the introduction took place quickly and was an important part of modernization and Americanization in the early postwar period.[25] This is almost always portrayed as a great relief in the women's workload, but it has also been discussed whether the introduction of many new consumer products actually brought more work through raising the hygiene standards.[26] During this period, the new artificial fibers were taken into use to a larger degree, not only the first cellulose fibers but also the synthetic ones. This led to a more differentiated laundry and more washing at low temperatures. Introduction of new finishes and blended materials enhanced this change. Increased use of, among other things, knitwear at the expense of woven goods,[27] reduced the proportion of textiles needing ironing to look smooth.

The last half of the twentieth century brought major changes in clothing and washing habits. The liberalization in trade when the import quotas imposed by the Multi-Fiber

Arrangement were progressively phased out starting in the 1980s led to rapid growth in the import of clothing, falling prices, and a decline in the country's own textile industry.[28] This happened in Norway as in other industrialized countries, with downsizing of the textile industry as a result, although some companies have survived to the present day.[29]

The growth in laundry in the period after 1950 was caused particularly due to increased amounts of clothes, more washable clothes, and an increased change frequency for clothes and towels, that is, people use the textiles shorter time before they are washed. The demand for laundry to be whiter than white is no longer as important as in the 1950s and 1960s[30] as a higher share of textiles are dyed,[31] and there are other ways of demonstrating the right feminity, such as changing clothes often.[32] The textile industry also focused on developing stain-repelling finishes for easy-care fabrics.[33] During this period, there was little change in the washing of bed linen and possibly a decline in the washing of interior textiles. The latter is due to less use of such textiles and the transition to other materials, such as paper napkins and waxed tablecloths. The use of disposable sanitary towels and diapers significantly reduced the amount of dirty laundry. Underwear was washed very frequently but did not necessarily lead to an increase in the amount of dirty laundry.[34] This was both because each individual garment became smaller and lighter and because fewer garment types were in use during the end of the century. Underwear such as shirts, corsets, suspenders, petticoats, etc. are used less, and only underpants remain as absolutely necessary.

At the end of the twentieth century, it became clear that it was not the collective laundries, but the privately owned automatic washing machines became the most widespread washing solution for most people. The fully automatic washing machine became standard equipment in Norwegian homes, as well as in many other countries such as Belgium, where in the 1970s, more than 70% of households acquired it.[35] Women still spent a lot of time washing, but the washing problem was considered solved, through the major improvements that came during this period.

After 2000

A washing machine is now part of the standard equipment in households in Norway and other Western countries. About 94% of households in Western Europe have their own, while the figure is lower the United States (86%) and in Eastern Europe (66%), but higher in the Australia (97%).[36] Ownership rate in Norway (91%) is close to the average of other Western countries.[37] The number of textiles in homes has continued to rise, but the washing frequency for some textiles has flattened out. There is a greater focus on environmental aspects of laundry, and this has led to machines with lower energy and water consumption and more efficient detergents.[38]

Professional expertise in laundry has contributed to the reduction of the washing temperature since World War II. It was first changed from boiling laundry down to 60°C around 1980, as a result of new washing technologies and textile materials. The change from 60°C to 40°C and lower, however, was implemented against the experts' advice.[39] For example, the average laundering temperature decreased from 63°C in 1972 to 46°C in 2014 in Germany.[40] The newer detergent formulations clean better at a lower temperature than the previous formulations especially due to the introduction of enzymes that allowed reduction of the level of surfactants and related environmental impacts.[41] In recent years, the experts' advice has varied, depending on whether they value hygienic or environmental arguments the most. Most people agree that low washing temperatures can be used at home for washing clothes, except in cases of epidemics or for particularly vulnerable user groups. We do not know how and if the COVID-19 pandemic will affect washing habits in the long term, but studies so far indicate that the pandemic changed our clothing practices related to acquisition more than the laundering.[42]

Greater awareness of environmental impacts has led to a debate about the frequency of washing that will be discussed later in this chapter. Today, it is more common to change clothes and wash them often. The reasons for this are many. To begin with, the increase in washing frequency is due to the increased focus on hygiene.[43] Later, new aids have made washing easier and replaced many of the older techniques.[44] Modern detergents are better at stain removal, and since clothes are washed more often, the dirt has less time to fasten. Therefore less work is required for stain removal, soaking, and prewash steps. At the same time, interest in odors has increased and replaced earlier signs of cleanliness, such as whiteness and absence of stains. Sweaty body odor has been reported to be the most common type of odor detected in clothing, with 88% of people in an international survey noticing it regularly. The next most common odor was food odor, such as cooking smells (57%).[45]

This change away from protective clothing to washable clothing also applies in the health care system, where the nurse's apron has been replaced with easily washable clothing. Due to this elevated standard, laundry is part of the housework where time is not significantly reduced, despite major technological improvements.[46] Keeping your clothes in order and keeping them clean is more difficult with a lot of clothes. Clothes are thus washed not only because you are dirty, but because there is a possibility that they may be dirty, and because they represent clutter at home, i.e., something that does not belong.[47] Washing can thus be a way to declutter.

There are variations around the world in what are the most common methods to clean textiles. Washing textiles in the washing machine with detergents is by far the most common, but in some regions, such as China, washing by hand is still important.[48]

The work with finishing laundry after washing has been greatly reduced. Reduced portions of textiles are ironed; the use of a higher proportion of knitted clothes and dryers are among the reasons for this. The environmental impact of finishing, on the other hand, has increased. Both through the use of energy for tumble drying rather than drying outdoors that does not require heating, and through the use of environmentally harmful chemicals such as fabric softeners. The fabric softeners give clothes in synthetic fibers a bad smell,[49] which also contributes to increased washing frequency and even more environmental impact.

Dirt, Smell, and Bacteria

One 3 kg laundry load contains between 15 and 100 grams of soil.[50] The main stain categories include colored stains such as coffee, fruit, and red wine; water-soluble contaminations such as salts, sugar, perspiration, and urea; hydrophobic stains such as fat, grease, and wax; proteins such as eggs and blood; and particles such as dust, skin flakes, sand, humus, and soot.[51] Water dissolves many of the soil types as well as the detergents and carries out the soil once it is loosened.[52]

It is a common notion that clothes are washed to "kill" bacteria and that this removes the odors. Indeed, the use of chemical disinfection through bleaching agents and/or thermal disinfection by using high temperature in washing, drying or ironing reduces the microbial counts,[53] and the odor generation mechanisms correlate with microbial participation.[54] However, it is the soils—such as triglycerides and wax esters, sweat, and dead skin cells from our bodies—that are first and foremost removed in laundering. These function as microbial nourishment.

The cleaning practices today are characterized by frequent laundering.[55] One of the reasons is that avoidance and removal of body odor have gained importance.[56]

Water, Chemicals, and Energy

Laundry is a technique for cleaning textiles with water, which is our most important cleaning solvent when washing textiles by hand or in a washing machine, but also at professional wet-cleaning methods. There are also means to clean textiles without or with less water, such as airing, freezing, steaming, stain removal, physical removal (brushing, vacuuming, or beating, shaking, and hanging outdoors) or dry-cleaning. Dry cleaning is less common in Norway than in many other Western countries.

The cleaning result of the laundry will depend on the amount and type of water, temperature, length of washing cycles, added chemicals such as soap or synthetic detergents, and mechanical agitation applied. Soils can be removed either by temperature, mechanical force, interfacial processes or by chemical degradation, such as by using enzymes or bleaching agents.[57] In the work of making the washing machines more energy-efficient, the washing programs have therefore become longer, because more time and less mechanical agitation are applied, in addition to a lower temperature to meet the energy labeling requirements.[58]

The mechanical agitation moves the water through the textile to dissolve and remove the stains and odors.[59] The temperature has different effects on dirt of various kinds. Higher temperatures cause stains of protein to solidify and adhere when washed in warm water but are more effective at removing fat. At higher temperatures, many of the detergent's chemicals for stain removal will also work better.[60] Stain removal before washing and washing at lower temperatures, therefore, saves energy and still ensures a stain-free wash.

There are large national differences in average laundry temperatures, both throughout time and today between different countries. The average European washing temperature was 42.4°C in 2020.[61] Scandinavia is higher than this (46.2°C) and Southern Europe lower (39.7°C).[62] In the USA, the average temperature is 30°C, while in Japan unheated water around 20°C is used.[63]

Soap triumphed as the strongest weapon of purity from the end of the nineteenth century,[64] but in today's laundry, soap is no longer the most common laundering chemical in Western countries. Detergents help to loosen dirt from the clothes and to keep the dirt floating in the washing water so that it does not fall back on the clothes.[65] Detergents may contain soap or synthetic surfactants, and they may contain enzymes, bleaches and optical brighteners, perfumes and colorants. The detergents today are liquid or have a powder form, and are not solid pieces or chips, as when the soap dominated. Liquid detergents are best for wool and short washing programs but contain more preservatives. An important change in detergents came in the 1990s when they became more concentrated.[66] These are referred to as "compact." The change was made to reduce the environmental impact. Smaller packages mean less transport, but the compact agents also led to overdosing because most consumers keep on dosing the detergent arbitrary[67] and thus did not reduce the amount. Overdose is a common mistake many people make, contributing to both increase the environmental impact and result in less clean washing results due to poorer rinsing effects.[68]

Fabric softeners, also called fabric conditioners or enhancers, are chemicals that are added to the rinse water to achieve various effects. Initially, they were developed to make synthetic fabrics less prone to static electricity. Today, they are more often used to soften cotton, ease ironing and add scent to laundry.[69] Studies indicate that softeners are used in about 55% of washing cycles in Europe,[70] but there are great national differences. In Norway, about 61% use them often, 19% sometimes, and 19% never,[71] while in Hungary and Romania only about 5% use softeners in all wash cycles and 60% never use them.[72] Softeners can contain chemicals that are harmful to the environment or human health such as perfume and preservatives.[73]

Many consumers use softeners due to the scent they add to the laundry, but at the same time, the chemicals contribute to reinforce the problem they are meant to solve. A comparison between laundering with or without softeners showed that laundry washed with perfume-free softeners was more odorous than one washed without it, and the difference was especially noticeable on synthetic materials.[74] Consumers who used laundry softeners had also more often problems with laundry giving off a bad smell after wash. It is therefore especially important to avoid softeners on polyester sports clothing. Manufacturers can add chemicals, such as anti-microbial substances, to synthetic clothing to reduce odor. Since clothes are not sold with a list of ingredients, it is difficult to know how common this is. Such chemicals can be harmful to health and the environment,[75] and it is also uncertain how effective they are.[76]

Laundering Step by Step

Laundry involves several different sequential work processes. It starts with the preparation, such as removing unwanted items, small things in the pockets, jewelery, closing zippers and velcros, and so on. This can be done at the same time as sorting. Textiles are sorted before washing because different textile materials require and can withstand different cleaning treatments and at the same time retain properties such as shape and color.[77] To make this work easier, clothing is equipped with a mandatory care label with standardized washing instruction symbols. Today's washing habits and equipment for laundry are adapted to the textile fibers that are used most: cotton and polyester. Wool does not need the same type of wash and does not tolerate this treatment well.

Soaking means that the garments are in the water before washing. This was common in the past when the dirty clothes had often been lying around for a long time, and as they mostly consisted of uncolored linen and cotton. Soaking is less suitable for wool or dyed cotton.

Prewash is a short wash before the main wash. Prewashing was more common in the past. This was due both to the fact that the laundry was dirtier, lay longer before it was washed and that the detergents were worse. If you want a cleaner wash today, an extra rinse will often be more effective.[78]

Laundry can be performed in different ways and with different aids and chemicals, such as detergents. In Norway, cooking in wood ashes (lye) has been common. At the end of the nineteenth century, lye was replaced by washing with soap, first for hand washing and later as machine washing. The wash can be done in several rounds, as a prewash followed by the main wash, and followed by several rounds of rinsing. Between rinses and after the last rinse, the water with detergent and dirt residues must be remeved. This is usually done in a washing machine, through centrifugation, but it can also be done by hand by twisting the textiles. Several different techniques and aids have been developed to get the water out, such as rolling the laundry between rollers powered by hand or machine power. This method still existis, but is becoming less and less common.

In the present day the washing machines can be adjusted in terms of temperature, water volume, mechanical processing, spin speed and the time used for the various processes. Most front-loading washing machines, such as those used in Norway, have ready-made programs with pre-selection that is adapted to the most common textiles, but it is often also possible to choose other combinations.

Clothes are dried in various ways. Common to all is that air, possibly hot air, is added and that the moisture evaporates and is carried away with the air. Utensils used are various forms of drying racks and cords indoors and outdoors, drying cabinets, dryers and separate drying rooms, such as drying ceilings with or without heating. The use of tumble driers varies greatly even between the Western countries, the USA being on top with about 80% of households owning one,[79] while the average for Europe is around 32% of households.[80]

The finishing steps of the laundry include techniques that give freshly washed fabrics the desired shape, structure, and surface. They include work with ironing, pressing, stiffening, rolling, stretching, folding, and storing the textiles. This finishing work was previously extensive. In the 1950s and 1960s, housewives in Norway spent 30% to 40% of the total time associated with laundry for this work.[81] In the efforts to rationalize the housework, the focus was therefore on the finishing work. Today, less time is dedicated to these steps such as ironing, which has reduced especially during the last decades. Ironing practices vary greatly between countries and consumer groups, but also between different types of garments. In Norway, about 12% of adults iron weekly, 40% monthly, 28% more seldom than that, and 20% say they never iron anything.[82] A larger share of men and young respondents do not iron, than women and elderly respondents.

Better Equipment but More Work

In Norway, laundry is mostly done as part of the housework and thus as unpaid work at home. Laundry is also performed in commercial laundries and laundries for large institutions, such as in health care. The more frequent laundering has contributed to an increase in time consumption in laundering. Laundry, together with other clothing maintenance activities, is the part of the housework where the difference between women's and men's efforts is greatest, and women do the most, as figures from Statistics Norway's time-use surveys also show.[83]

A study conducted in 2011 estimated that the average washing frequency in Europe was 3.8 washing cycles per week.[84] The number of washing cycles is very dependent on the size of the household. In Norway, the washing frequency for a family of four in 2010 was between 6.5 and 8–9 washes per week.[85] While the number of washing cycles increases with the number of persons in the household, the average number of washing cycles per person decreases, indicating more efficient filling of the washing machine.[86]

The number of days garments are used between washes vary greatly between different types of garments. Items such as underpants and socks are usually washed after each use,[87] while some outer garments are rarely washed. Even the same types of garments can be washed at different frequencies in different countries. A comparison of laundering practices between five countries indicated that the Japanese clean their formal wear more seldom (after 8.8 wears) than for example Chinese and American consumers who clean them after 3.3 and 3.6 wears, respectively.[88]

Environmental Impacts of Laundry

Laundering and other textile cleaning activities have various environmental impacts. It consumes water, laundry chemicals, and energy, but can also spread numerous residual chemicals used in textile dyeing and finishing, as well as microplastics from synthetic textiles.[89] The magnitude of laundering's environmental impacts is dependent on the types of chemicals and fibers that are used but also the laundering frequency and type of washing machines.

The number of days garments are used between washes vary greatly between different types of garments, materials, users, climate, and culture. In hot and humid countries such as India, laundry is usually washed as soon as it is dirty instead of accumulating larger loads over time.[90] This causes more frequent laundering with smaller laundry loads. Garments worn directly over high-odor body areas such as underarms, feet, and crotch tend to be washed most frequently, including underwear and socks.[91] Clothing that has been worn during exercise is also likely to be washed more frequently than similar items worn for less strenuous activities.[92] However, there are some differences in this based on fiber content, as woolen garments are washed less frequently than garments made of other materials.[93] Material choice is likely to impact the washing frequencies because synthetic garments, such as those made of polyester or polyamide, are more likely to smell strongly of body odor than clothing composed of natural materials such as wool or cotton.[94]

Another environmental disadvantage of frequent laundering is additional wear and tear on clothing, which indirectly shortens the lifespans of garments.[95] Furthermore, if laundering is not successful and stains or odors remain in garments, they can cause premature clothing disposal. These items are more likely to be disposed of in the trash instead of being delivered to reuse or recycling, thus additionally contributing to unsustainable clothing consumption.[96]

The environmental impacts of laundering vary also between countries depending on the infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, types of energy sources and whether there is water scarcity, in addition to the used laundering technologies and frequencies. Comparison between China, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the USA indicated that consumption values and related CO_2 emissions in the United States are usually the highest, mainly due to extensive use of clothes dryers and less efficient washing machines. In Japan, it is common to use unheated water in laundering and line drying instead of using clothes dryers, and thus the average consumption values are the lowest of the five countries.[97]

Microfiber and Microplastic

Microfiber is not a specific type of fiber, but a very small (micro size <5 mm) fiber of any material. Even smaller fibers (smaller than 100 nm) are called nanofibers.[98] If microfiber is made of a synthetic material, i.e., plastic, it is called microplastic. Microplastics are a major environmental problem we currently know little about the consequences of, but there is evidence that ecological and human health effects occur through physical, chemical and biological mechanisms.[99] Research indicates that laundry is one of the biggest sources of the spread of microplastics. Probably as much as 20% to 35% of all primary microplastic sources in the marine environment are from washing synthetic clothing,[100] which is not so strange considering that synthetic textiles constitute now over 60% of all textiles globally.[101]

Measures that can reduce the spread of microplastics from textiles include reducing the use of such materials. All clothes we buy, especially the synthetic ones, should have high technical quality and be made for long and faithful service. Other measures include reducing the washing frequency of such items, in addition to washing them in gentle cycles and avoiding overdosing detergents to reduce mechanical agitation. Finally, due to low biodegradability, the end-of-life of synthetics is crucial for how much plastics end up in nature. If not recycled, they should be incinerated to avoid ending up in places like the Atacama Desert of Chile[102] or landfills in the outskirts of Accra in Ghana,[103] where they gradually break into smaller pieces and finally into microplastics.

Ways to collect microfibers from the laundering are being developed in the form of filters, washing bags and things made of plastic that will collect the fibers in the machine.[104] The efficiency of such products still needs to be determined, both related to how effectively they collect the microplastic, and how much they affect washing results.[105] The effect of such filters will also depend on them being emptied and disposed of in such a way that the collected microplastics are destroyed. Filters in the washing machine will not prevent spread via air and house dust, and the release of fibers during tumble drying can be higher (up to 3.5 times) than during washing.[106]

Ordinary, but Culturally and Technically Complex

In this article, we have given an insight into the history and function of laundry. Laundry is very mundane and usual, but it is also an activity with major consequences both in terms of environmental impact and possible loss of social credibility. This applies to clothing in general as well, because clothes are complex both culturally and technically. Laundry concerns everyone today, because clothes are culturally and technically complex. We assess every day whether our clothes are clean or dirty, whether we can enjoy wearing them and whether they are clean enough for us to go out and meet others in them. These streams of many small decisions together make one big river.

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Notes

1 Douglas, Purity.
2 Sundt, Renligheds-stellet.
3 Haugen, *Norsk bunadleksikon*.
4 Klepp and Tobiasson, *Ren ull*.
5 Klepp and Laitala, "Nisseluelandet," 171–95.; Laitala and Klepp, "Care and Production of Clothing,"; Laitala, *et al*., "Increasing repair."
6 Entwistle, *Fashioned body*.
7 Broby-Johansen, *Kropp og klær*.
8 Klepp, "Cleanliness."
9 Klepp, *Fra rent til nyvasket*.; Klepp, "Cleanliness; Klepp, "Patched."
10 Bloomfield and Scott, "Home hygiene," S57-S66.; Bockmühl, "Laundry hygiene," 1124–33.; Larson and Duarte, "Hygiene practices," 116–27.
11 Corbin, *Foul*; Classen, Howes and Synnott, *Aroma*.
12 Klepp, "Cleanliness."; Classen, Howes and Synnott, *Aroma*.
13 Mauss, *Sociology*.

14 Strasser, *Never done*.
15 Sundt, *Renligheds-stellet*.
16 Cowan, *More work*.
17 Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
18 Cowan, *More work*.
19 Klepp, "Cleanliness."; Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
20 Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
21 Lund, "Branding Blenda"
22 Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
23 Lund, "Branding Blenda."
24 Ross, *Fast cars, clean bodies*.
25 Ross, *Fast cars, clean bodies*.
26 Cowan, *More work*; Ross, *Fast cars, clean bodies*.
27 Klepp and Tobiasson, *Norsk strikkehistorie*.
28 Heerden, Berhouet and Caspari, "Multi-Fibre Arrangement."
29 Klepp and Laitala, "Nisseluelandet."
30 Klepp, *Fra rent til nyvasket*.
31 Grimsvang and Klonteig, "Husholdningsvask."
32 Klepp, "Cleanliness."
33 Namligoz, *et al.*, "Performance comparison," 76.
34 Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
35 Glorieux and Tienoven, "Les tâches domestiques," 100.
36 Pakula and Stamminger, "Electricity and water consumption."
37 SSB, "Consumer expenditure."
38 Boyano, Espinosa and Villanueva, "Energy label," 51–67; Saouter, *et al.*, "Compact detergents - Risk assessment"; Dreja, *et al.*, "Liquid Laundry Detergents."
39 Klepp, *Fra rent til nyvasket*.
40 Bockmühl, "Laundry hygiene."
41 Saouter, *et al.*, "Compact detergents - LCA," 27–38; Dreja, *et al.*, "Liquid Laundry Detergents," 108–12.
42 Vittersø, *et al.*, "Bærekraftig koronaliv."
43 Klepp, "Hygienisk argument."
44 Shehan and Moras, "Deconstructing laundry."
45 McQueen, *et al.*, "Impact of odour."
46 Klepp, "Clothes and Cleanliness."
47 Laitala, Klepp and Boks, "Laundry habits."
48 Laitala, Klepp and Henry, "Use phase"; Kruschwitz, *et al.*, "Laundry practices"; Laitala, Klepp and Henry, "Global laundering practices."
49 Laitala, Kjeldsberg and Klepp, "Troubles."
50 Laurent, *et al.*, "Laundry Cleaning of Textiles."
51 Klepp and Tobiasson, *Lettstelt*; Laurent, *et al.*, "Laundry Cleaning of Textiles."; Hasenclever, "Dry Cleaning."
52 Johansson and Somasundaran, *Cleaning/decontamination*.
53 Munk, *et al.*, "Microbial survival."
54 Takeuchi, Yabuki and Hasegawa, "Odorants."
55 Ashenburg, *Unsanitized history;* Shove, *Comfort*.
56 Klepp, "Cleanliness."; Classen, Howes and Synnott, *Aroma*.
57 Rybinski, "Cleaning Processes," 4.
58 Boyano, Espinosa and Villanueva, "Energy label."
59 Johansson and Somasundaran, *Cleaning/decontamination*.
60 Laurent, *et al.*, "Laundry Cleaning of Textiles."
61 A.I.S.E., "European habits."
62 A.I.S.E., "Low temperature washing."
63 Laitala, *et al.*, "Laundry care regimes," 7537.
64 Jones, *Beauty imagined*.
65 Laurent, *et al.*, "Laundry Cleaning of Textiles."
66 Saouter, *et al.*, "Compact detergents - Risk assessment," 363–72.

67 A.I.S.E., “European habits.”
68 Paloviita and Järvi, “Detergents use phase,” 607–12; Arild*, et al.*, “Domestic laundry.”
69 Zia*, et al.*, “Amino silicone softener”; Crutzen, “Fabric softeners”; Murphy, “Fabric softener technology.”
70 Stamminger, “Laundry washing.”
71 Laitala, Kjeldsberg and Klepp, “Troubles.”
72 Stamminger, “Laundry washing.”
73 Steinemann, “Fragranced consumer products.”
74 Laitala, Kjeldsberg and Klepp, “Troubles.”
75 Kemikalieinspektionen, “Antibakteriella ämnen.”
76 McQueen and Vaezafshar, “Odor in textiles.”
77 Klepp and Tobiasson, *Lettstelt.*
78 Arild*, et al.*, “Domestic laundry.”
79 Engelberg and Brassell, “Fuel Usage”; Siebens, “Measures of Well-Being.”
80 de Almeida*, et al.*, “Electricity consumption.”
81 Klepp, *Skittentøyets kulturhistorie,* 56.
82 Laitala, Klepp and Henry, “Use phase”
83 Vaage, “Tidene skifter.”
84 Schmitz and Stamminger, “Usage behaviour,” 937–54.
85 Klepp and Laitala, “Klesforbruk.”
86 Kruschwitz*, et al.*, “Laundry practices.”
87 Laitala, Klepp and Henry, “Does Use Matter?.”
88 Laitala*, et al.*, “Laundry care regimes,” 7537.
89 Wiedemann*, et al.*, “Environmental impacts,” 1486–99; BSR, “Apparel Industry.”
90 Honold, “Culture and Context,” 327–45.
91 McQueen*, et al.*, “Impact of odour”; Laitala, Klepp and Boks, “Laundry habits.”
92 McQueen*, et al.*, “Impact of odour.”
93 Laitala, Klepp and Boks, “Laundry habits,” 228–37; Laitala*, et al.*, “Laundry care regimes.”
94 Laing, “Natural fibres,” 1329; McQueen and Vaezafshar, “Odor in textiles,” 1157–73.
95 McQueen*, et al.*, “Reducing laundering frequency,” 36–45.
96 McQueen*, et al.*, “Odour and clothing disposal,” 1–8.
97 Laitala*, et al.*, “Laundry care regimes,” 7537.
98 Henry, Laitala and Klepp, “Microfibres from apparel.”
99 Henry, Laitala and Klepp, “Microfibres from apparel”
100 Boucher and Friot, “Primary Microplastics”; Eunomia, “Plastics in the Marine Environment.”.
101 Textile Exchange, “Preferred Fiber”
102 Duong, “Chile’s Atacama Desert”
103 Besser, “Dead white man’s clothes.”
104 Herweyers*, et al.*, “Products Preventing Microfiber Pollution”; McIlwraith*, et al.*, “Capturing microfibers.”
105 Schöpel and Stamminger, “Microfibres from Washing Machines,” 94–104.
106 Pirc*, et al.*, “Emissions of microplastic,” 22206–11.

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27 The Cultural Economies of Secondhand Clothes

Jennifer Le Zotte

The exchange of secondhand clothing is older than fashion itself. Globally, articles of clothing have functioned as currency to be bartered, sold, and traded for as long as cloth garments existed. But the role of secondhand clothing as a culturally significant engine of fashion is largely a phenomenon of large-scale production beginning in the late nineteenth century. The influence of secondhand styles grew slowly, as many post-industrial consumers throughout Europe and America considered the purchase and styling of used clothing stigmatized by its association with Jewish merchants and poverty.[1] Fashionable consumers of new items viewed secondhand clothes shopping as aspirational, assuming styles created with outdated garments would be out of step with current trends. Contrary to these beliefs, clothing trends ave for decades responded to the cultural and economic significance of secondhand materials.[2]

Today, the value of voluntary secondhand dress still relies on lingering expectations that wearing cast-off clothing signifies financial disgrace, social embarrassment, or at least an unwillingness to conform to mainstream fashion. In the context of continued but diminished stigma, voluntary integration of visibly used garments in a wardrobe signifies calculated rebellion. Fueling the perennial popularity of secondhand styles for about a century now, a host of often-generational objections to mainstream ideals accompany secondhand styles.[3] The particular ebb and flow of the interactions between secondhand commerce and broader cultural contexts are contingent upon time and place. Other scholars have assessed the role of secondhand clothes in preindustrial and early industrial England and Europe, the affects of discarded clothing on Zambia and Ireland, the specific importance of old clothes to the Jewish diaspora, post-World-War II reuse in Japan, and much more.[4] In order to focus closely on the reciprocal relationships between mainstream cultural change and secondhand clothing and commerce within one context, this chapter centers the United States for the main narrative. Some diverse geographical examples show that the popularization of secondhand styles arose from and influenced dress across the globe.

The modern cultural meanings of secondhand styles and the growth of used goods economies emerged alongside the availability of ready-made garments. After the late nineteenth century's second industrial revolution, more consumers had greater access to a broader variety of newly produced clothing. In turn, more consumers discarded wares while they were still viable and attractive. Over time, sartorial dialects of secondhand styles emerged, spread, and diversified, especially related to subcultural musical and artistic expression, from 1920s surrealist art to 1990s grunge and beyond. The cultural values of secondhand fashions and the businesses associated with them also took on political importance, including anti-capitalist and environmentalist implications. Over

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the course of the twentieth century, some secondhand businesses grew from modest, charitable storefronts to multimillion-dollar global corporations. Despite the expansion of used clothing venues amid the popularization of styles reliant on visibly secondhand materials, many consumers still view used clothing consumption as exempt from the ecological costs and labor abuses of new production. In practice, much secondhand consumption continues to normalize the high turnover of fashion cycles. The economic success of the fashion industry today relies on a drive for novelty, on the persuasiveness of planned obsolescence, a marketing tactic forged by the fashion and automotive industries. The massive amount and often, diminished quality, of clothing acquired new, with the help of cheap fast fashion, directly correlates to the affordability and accessibility of secondhand cloth items, too. Some argue that the status markers of high fashion that drove the logic behind planned obsolescence have been replaced by mass availability and affordability of styles that cross class boundaries.[5] Secondhand consumers who use resale in order to "keep up" with popular quantities of new outfits are full participants in the fashion system.[6]

The Birth of Thrift Stores

Between 1869 and 1899, investment in the US garment industry expanded drastically, particularly in women's wear, where invested capital increased 14 times, from $3.5 to $48 million. The garment workforce also grew sevenfold, from 12,000 to 84,000 workers, comprised largely of young, immigrant women, changing the composition of the American workforce—especially in New York City, where most US garment factories operated.[7] Urban working women influenced American style at the turn of the century, embracing cheap, readymade wares and incorporating secondhand goods sooner than their native-born, middle-class counterparts. Garment workers adapted their formal training and encounters with clothing outside their price range to their own tastes and means. Despite mainstream assumptions that fashion "trickled down," street styles, much of which depended on secondhand clothing, already influenced the preferred colors, cuts, and accessories of popular dress early in the twentieth century.[8]

Available stores of lightly worn used clothing grew. Cheaper, accessible new options meant that some consumers replaced their garments more quickly, tiring of their wardrobes while the material itself was still in fine shape. Also, with the greater public understanding and acceptance of the germ theory, creative reuse of cloth items waned. A responsible, middling-class housewife in the 1880s usually remade her own damaged or outdated clothes into outfits for her children, which might then be relegated to stuffing for furniture or rags for cleaning. In the United States and elsewhere, the acceptance of the germ theory, which described how illnesses cling to and are spread via physical materials, led to a much stricter definition of cleanliness. More cloth items were given or thrown away.[9]

Ideals of charity also changed in this period, shifting from direct-giving to philanthropic models which privileged "the deserving poor." Protestant-run salvage businesses, initially called salvage or "social service" stores, used contemporary marketing tools to advertise Christianized, sanitized, philanthropic sales venues. These operations involved collecting, repairing, distributing, and selling used goods with the labor of the very impoverished who demonstrated a willingness and ability to work. The rise of "thrift stores," as they were rebranded in the 1920s, dovetailed with increasing urban restrictions against pushcart sales, which offered various items for peripatetic sale on city streets. Pushcart salesmen often procured and resold used items, including clothing, and, like many secondhand businesses, were strongly associated with Jewish immigrants.[10]

The emerging thrift-store industry provided the indigent with low-paying jobs and some clothing provisions, while also earning profits designated for evangelism and various forms of aide for those in need. The Salvation Army, originally a British religious organization, expanded its operations to the United States in the 1890s. By the end of the 1920s, both the Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries had established two of the earliest still-existing chain businesses in the United States, with dozens of thrift stores in operation in numerous American cities.[11] From the start of these venues, consumers included voluntary shoppers, looking for creative and fashionable bargains without the urgency implied by "charity." A 1902 *New York Times* article detailing the average day's patrons at Salvation Army salvage store in Brooklyn included shifty-eyed hucksters and grateful immigrant mothers, but ended with a spirited young working woman. The red-lipsticked, gum-chewing girl bought a new-to-her pair of slippers to wear to a dance and casually abandoned her own perfectly viable footwear.[12]

The Birth of Flea Markets and the Voluntary Use of Secondhand

Young, working-class immigrants were not the only ones to apply secondhand materials to ideas of fashionability or to curate specific images before World War I. The Salvation Army itself dipped into their used clothing wares early in their existence in order to create a recognizable "uniform" for their "soldiers," the mostly middle-class Salvationists who joined the organization in order to do good and save souls. Soon they began to newly manufacture their uniforms but still used secondhand products to dress volunteers appropriately for tenement work. Even the organization's wealthy leaders, such as Evangeline Booth, the commander of the US Salvation Army at the turn of the century, made creative personal use of donated goods. In 1906, Commander Booth appeared on stage at Carnegie Hall wearing tattered clothing and broken-heeled shoes.[13] She used her appearance to dramatize the Army's work among the downtrodden, especially her own time spent in tenement slums, proselytizing to the very poor.[14] Throughout the twentieth century, creative dressers recognized the performative value of secondhand clothing, varied in its array and descriptive of diverse backgrounds and professional aims.

In the nineteenth century, upper-class women in the United States and Europe also repurposed, reused, and gifted secondhand clothing items, especially those handed down from significant relatives or acquired from members of European aristocracy.[15] In Paris, active trade in fine cloth items dated back to the thirteenth century, and by the nineteenth century, specially selected "dress agents" peddled the wares of royalty. Victorian Londoners could buy royal wardrobes at the Old Clothes Exchange; in 1831, George IV's extensive collection of garments were offered for public sale.[16] Recognizing, preserving, and showcasing high-quality textiles with historic allure remained a marker of wealth and status into the twentieth century, and was revived as a status marker for some members of the upper class after World War II.[17]

Though they may not have bandied about the details in polite society, middling-class women in America also bought secondhand garments of high quality at used goods stores, pawn shops, or from peddlers before the advent of modern thrift stores. European and American stage actresses who had to provide their own wardrobes relied on secondhand markets for both buying and selling. Amplified by actress's images printed in magazines and on *cartes de visite*, secondhand styles certainly influenced popular fashions through the theater, even when consumers remained ignorant of the clothing's origins.[18]

With the growth of large-scale production, revised ideas about sanitation and charity, and the advent of department stores and chain groceries, the branding and locations of secondhand clothing sales changed. For example, Paris's famed *Marché aux puces* grew into the seminal site of hodge-podge venders not long after the emergence of some of the world's first department stores. As *grand magasins* multiplied along Paris's main boulevards, so did laws restricting street selling of used goods. Soon, sidelined peddlers gathered their wares just outside the city limits in St. Ouen, where the new regulations did not apply. Around 1885, newspapers dubbed the collection of sellers and their wares a "market of the fleas," namely for the cloth goods sold there, supposedly threatened by throngs of bugs.[19] Waterloo Square in Amsterdam and various *Flohmarkt* in Germany also predated the expansion of such sites in US cities. American flea markets did brisk businesses in rural parts of the country early in the twentieth century but surged in cities after World War I, in place of food stalls in partially vacated public markets. As chain grocery stores such as the A & P (originally The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company) proliferated, peddlers of secondhand goods filled in the gaps left by produce venders in open-air markets. The slightly bohemian, Franophilic panache of used items helped expand potential clientele, as evidenced by the trend in American cities for upper-class secondhand fundraising sales with French names, such as *Foire aux Croutes* (Fair of the Crusts) in Washington, D.C., in the 1930s and 1940s.[20]

In the 1920s, secondhand clothing did not yet emerge as fashionable influences over specific trends, but the experimentation of surrealists, Dadaists, and other avant-garde artists with "found" objects redefined the cultural potential of used objects. Surrealists and Dadaists invested in disrupting artistic traditions enthused about flea markets in the teens and 1920s, connecting Paris's famed *Marché aux puces* and other European flea markets to New York City sites by way of exiled artists such as Marcel Duchamp and André Breton. As Susan Sontag would later write, "it was Breton and other Surrealists who invented the secondhand store as a temple of vanguard taste and upgraded visits to flea markets into a mode of aesthetic pilgrimage." Sontag critiqued this attraction by pointing out that many of the objects and images that surrealists claimed "transcended reality" were mundane products extending from unfamiliar cultures, classes, and ethnicities.[21] The later popularity of secondhand fashion would also rely on middle-class white Americans' imagined solidarity with marginalized groups, indicating the importance of class and racial identities in establishing the desirability of secondhand styles.

The stigmatization of secondhand garments persisted along with antisemitism, but in the United States, both biases began to diminish a bit in the 1920s, as immigration slowed and previous newcomers assimilated.[22] Broadway star Fanny Brice leveraged the association between secondhand commerce and Jewishness to humorous affect in her hit song "Second Hand Rose," first performed in 1921, and recorded in 1923, the same year Brice had surgery to change her "Jewish" nose from "prominent to merely decorative."[23] "Second Hand Rose" features a young girl, the daughter of a secondhand shop owner, complaining of everything she has being preowned, "Everything I'm wearing, someone wore before me." While the song does not exactly celebrate used clothing, the tone is humorous and sympathetic when compared to the moralizing that accompanied buying second hand just a generation before. Brice's personal success and the comic use of secondhand dress in the national hit indicated a shift in acceptance of both Jewish immigrants and used clothing in the United States. Through the rest of the twentieth century and beyond, the association between voluntary secondhand dress and popular music persisted.[24]

During the Great Depression, the demand for secondhand styles predictably grew, but the potential fashionable contributions of visibly secondhand styles lagged along with the economy. While domestic skills in making do, mending, and reusing surged, at-home designers sought to replicate new productions, not to create unique visibly secondhand looks. For example, just before the economy nosedived, influential French designer Jean Patou pronounced a decree for longer skirts. Many Europeans and Americans complied, but some by adding their own godets (flared inserts) of contrasting fabric at home, a trick that also served to mask the growing dearth of intact stockings.[25] In this and similar ways, consumers remade secondhand items into new-looking garments, desirable amidst the economic downturn.

While many consumers undoubtedly sought out familiar secondhand venues during the Great Depression—both thrift stores and flea markets saw enormous growth in the 1920s—supply decreased in the 1930s, limiting the trade in pre-owned clothing. In the 1920s, middle-class housewives could justify jettisoning still-nice clothing in order to buy updated fashions. Charity shops or thrift stores emphasized the good donations did for poor and immigrant families. First-hand consumers could keep up with more rapidly changing styles while feeling benevolent along the way. In the 1930s, straitened budgets reduced firsthand purchases, and correlating secondhand donations slowed so much in England and the United States that the Salvation Army and Goodwill survived by re-purposing paper goods like old newspapers, another longstanding function of the organizations.[26]

Garage Sales and "Vintage" Clothing

After World War II ended, the voluntary consumption of visibly secondhand clothing accelerated in Europe and the United States, as both supply and demand surged. In England, "youth subcultures" ransacked "jumble sales and ragmarkets" for used clothing to create individualized styles.[27] In the United States, "vintage" emerged as a descriptor of desirable used clothing. As France struggled to recover from Nazi occupation, American housewives hosted fundraisers that included fashion shows selling high-end, pre-war clothing. Fashion-savvy Americans, after all, had long associated cutting-edge design with Paris, which was cut off from the rest of the consumer world for the duration of Nazi occupation, so such events also served as anticipation of the restoration of Parisian fashion as central to American styles. As early as 1947, society page write-ups described high-end Parisian pre-war garments in these fundraising fashion shows as "vintage," in quotations marks, indicating the novel use of a word originally used to describe wine. The meaning of vintage first expanded in the 1920s to include older automobiles and fine household furnishings. As the fabric, styles, and cuts of older clothing grew more recognizably uncontemporary in the 1940s and 1950s, "vintage" was applied in order to cast certain old clothing in a more valuable light.[28]

After the end of World War II, newly produced clothing included an array of scientifically cutting-edge materials. Wartime technologies spurred the development of new synthetic-blend fabrics, which changed the look and cost of clothing. Polyesters, nylons, acetates, and acrylics, parading under brand names like Dacron, Terlenka, Orlon, and Crimplene, flooded the market with cheap, easily maintained garments.[29] New fabrics retained vibrant color more evenly than did natural materials, making the look and feel of novel fabric distinctive. An emphasis on comfort, affordability, and ease of maintenance characterized American clothing more than elsewhere.[30] At the same time homogeneity in clothing across class boundaries rose, the mass relocation of families from cities to suburbs brought out old clothing from attics, where they had been maintained through the leaner years of the Great Depression and World War II. The visual differences between pre- and postwar clothing were obvious. Secondhand clothing items were suddenly more identifiable, and for some, more desirable, as the appeal of distinction from the expanding middle class grew.

The growth of mostly white suburbs in America also spurred a new venue for secondhand sales: garage sales. At the same time millions of mostly white families joined the American middle class and moved into single-family homes in the 1950s, mass production of all sorts of goods rose, especially clothing and household items. For the first time in US history, a significant number of people had the space and means to store enough unwanted goods and clothing to justify an individual secondhand sale. The inclusion of clothing in these popular venues acclimated a new generation of Americans to the idea of buying pre-owned garments for stylistic purposes. Garage sales fit in well with other consumer trends of the era, including women-dominated home sales parties, such as through Avon and Tupperware corporations, and suburban men's fixation on DIY culture.[31] Secondhand clothing became more identifiable and accessible at the same time consumers began to wish for variability and to express exception from middle-class tastes, helping to brand "vintage" clothing as different and even elite in the 1950s and 1960s. Irrefutably, young people, especially college students, were instrumental to this shift.

Perhaps the first mainstream fad that helped popularize the use of the word "vintage" as applied to clothing in the United States came in 1957, when a brief craze among collegians for 1920s raccoon-fur coats spurred the sale of used or warehoused garments in major department stores' collegiate sections. In late 1956, a Greenwich Village fan of 1920s style, Sue Saltzman, lamented the near-miss of a 1920s racoon-fur coat at a Goodwill, snatched up by a competing consumer. After learning about a cache of the items at an acquaintance's clothing warehouse, she began collecting the coats from thrift stores and boys' clothing warehouses, where the items had moldered since the start of the Great Depression. The original 1920s trend, spurred on by the likes of football star Red Grange and crooner Rudy Vallée, had been at its apex when the stock market crashed, immediately damaging the sale of luxury items. The coats originally emerged from storage in 1955, when the Walt Disney hit film *Davy Crockett: King of the Wild Frontier* resulted in the repurposing of numerous coats into coonskin hats like the one sported by the show's hero. By the spring of 1957, Salzman and a business partner were doing brisk business of about 40 coats a week, suiting whole Broadway shows and eventually, attracting the attention of *Glamour* magazine. Lord & Taylor, Macy's, and other department stores soon advertised their own "vintage raccoon coats" to college students, boasting that the garments were in a state of "state of magnificent disrepair." Salzman fueled the furs' romantic images by reporting that "in one coat, they found a revolver and a mask; in another, a list of speakeasies."[32] As the supply of original coats ran dry (much stock had been cut up for Crockett hats), retailer attempts to sell newly produced versions failed, demonstrating the appeal of the "authentically vintage" 1920s apparel.

Beatniks, Hippies, and the British Invasion

As I have explained in *From Goodwill to Grunge: a History of Secondhand Styles and Alternative Economies,* America's vintage raccoon-fur coat craze was short-lived and the marketing label of vintage temporarily retreated, but a more significant fad for secondhand fashion was burgeoning in London.[33] By 1956, flea-market stalls on Portobello Road were already seeing a brisk trade in Victoriana goods and clothing, especially garments with military elements. Such stalls morphed into standalone boutiques which sold materials, objects, and styles from exotic contemporary locations and the mostly British past. King's Road housed many of these new boutiques and also an upper-class hipster and celebrity scene, haunted by titled nobility and rock 'n' roll superstars. One of the first such stores, Granny Takes a Trip, opened its King's Road doors early in 1966. Granny Takes a Trip featured Victorian army coats, Edwardian ostrich-plumed hats, pony-skin shirts, and velvet jackets, much of which were objects collected over the course of years of flea market stall sales and foreign travel.[34]

I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet (IWLKV), perhaps the most culturally important of these boutiques, also began as a Portobello Road stall specializing in Victorian accessories. The proprietors, John Paul and Robert Orbach, recognized the specific market for Victorian military uniforms, and replicas of the same. Flea-market success allowed them to open a stand-alone store, also on Portobello Road, in 1966. Shortly after the opening, John Lennon, Mick Jagger, and Cynthia Lennon arrived to peruse the wares. The *Rolling Stones* front man Jagger left with a red Grenadier guardsman drummer's jacket, possibly gleaned from the British Army Surplus. Shortly after, Jagger wore the red coat on the popular British rock/pop television show *Ready! Steady! Go!*[35] The next day, IWLKV opened to a line of a hundred people wanting similar styles, which the store sold out of by noon. Soon, vintage looks, especially military-inspired ones, defined 1960s rock star style. Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix joined in the fad, as did all the Beatles, whose 1967 album cover for *Sgt Peppers's Lonely Heart Hearts' Club Band* featured costumes inspired by an IWLKV window display. The vintage craze expanded, and London's vintage boutiques multiplied: Cobwebs, Antiquarius, and Past Caring all included colonial relics mocking Britain's imperial past and amplifying secondhand fashion's growing reputation as countercultural and antiestablishment.[36] Such stores relied on a broader array of antiquated styles than did the Saltzmans' raccoon fur coat racket, and purveyors found ample, international sources for Victorian undergarments, military uniforms, 1930s Chicago gangster suits, and exotic accents like Arabian headdresses. The prices far outpaced those of the Salvation Army, indicating a new, defiant demand for certain old clothing.

In Europe and the United States, vintage styles of the 1960s represented rebellion, a disdain for mass consumerism, and an urge for public distinction. These youth-driven, transnational trends did push back against a consolidating fashion industry, but they were not exactly a grassroots endeavor. While some of those involved in creating these fashions were modestly financed London art students, "Ragamuffin chic"—a term used to describe the heavily curated vintage styles—also relied on the influences of elite individuals with plenty of time, money, and access to resources. Members of the London nobility, such as Jane Ormsby-Gore (purported inspiration for *The Rolling Stones* hit song, "Lady Jane") and Christopher Gibbs, were central to the transmission of the English secondhand fashion scene to the broader public. Gibbs, fresh from the Sorbonne, after getting kicked out of Eton, earned a reputation as "the most avant-garde dresser" in England, where he ran an antique shop starting in the 1950s.[37] By traveling around the world, Gibbs curated an unusually colorful wardrobe consisting of new and used clothing. He also admitted that to dress like him and his cohort of flaneurs, "You had to be monumentally narcissistic and have time on your hands, and just about enough money."[38]

Gibbs is credited with inspiring the "peacock movement," which sought to reinstall colorful flourishes in men's dress, including widening, bright lapels, extravagant bell bottoms, and tight, flowered shirts. Gibbs solidified his sartorial status in 1965 when *Men in Vogue*, a short-lived men's version of *Vogue*, drafted him to edit their shopping guide.[39] Similarly, Jane Ormsby-Gore, daughter of the titled British ambassador to the United States under John F. Kennedy's presidential term, used her wealth and leisure to craft a distinctively exotic secondhand style. Between haunting high-end fashion shows, and jet-setting to peruse Russian antiques, Ormsby-Gore also briefly joined the British staff of *Vogue*.[40] In the United States, elite vintage wares also inspired a hippie-inflected, Victorian-into-Edwardian craze in the 1960s, exemplified by the designs of a wealthy Whittier College drop-out who dressed rock star Janis Joplin. [41] These vintage styles, which rejected the new accessibility of middle-class fashion, required time, money, and exception from mainstream, "straight" employment. They resembled in detail much of the London style, but added American Western and Native American accents to the aesthetics of velvet and brocade.

In America, before the Edwardian hippie-chic secondhand styles took over, another mode of secondhand dress rose, one centered around what I've dubbed "elective poverty." Beat writers, along with other anti-capitalist, anti-poverty, and anti-war activists embraced what nineteenth-century French observers dubbed *nostalgie de la boue*, or nostalgia for the mud. The original application of the term applied to the early-to-mid-nineteenth century emergence of the so-named "bohemian." Henri Murger sketch of the Parisian 1840s artist in his autobiographical *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* (1851) tied the creative life to cultivated poverty.[42] While equally as performative as vintage-wear on international rock stars, elective poverty moved in the other direction from the newly accessible, tidy, and practical middle-class aesthetics. Expressions of both vintage exhibitionism and elective poverty looked to vacate the mostly white middle class around the same time; Jack Kerouac's Beat bible *On the Road* came out in 1957, the same year as the height of the vintage racoon fur coat craze.[43]

Based on a conviction that sincerity, depth, equality, and creativity were more accessible from the economic and racial margins of society, the "beat generation" of American writers and artists staked an early claim to visibly secondhand style. Poet Allen Ginsberg wrote that "the essence of the phrase 'beat generation' can be found in one of Jack Kerouac's most celebrated axioms, 'Everything belongs to me because I am poor.'"[44] This maxim repeated in various of Kerouac's work from 1951 on, expressing white, middle-class beat writers' admiration for Black Americans and the working class. Beat writers such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg embraced a thrift-store aesthetic expressing working-class solidarity. For Beat poet Gary Snyder, secondhand consumerism combined a nascent environmentalism with a spiritual desire for self-denial connected to a strong admiration for Zen Buddhism. Even before Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) spurred the modern environmental movement in the United States, Snyder portrayed secondhand sales venues as morally and spiritually superior to new distribution sites. His 1960 poem "Bubbs Creek Haircut" starts the narrator in a Goodwill looking for a sweater, and ends up portraying a trail hike riddled with animated objects "freed" of their originally intended purposes, leading to a Goodwill basement transformed into wild nature.[45] Beat idealization of the transformative power of secondhand objects borrowed from the Surrealists and applied the approach to their own personal dress—and literature. Though elective poverty dress was relatively consistent among them, Beats had little uniform style beyond featuring secondhand clothing and working-class fabrics like denim and flannel. One key indicator of voluntary poverty dress is the inclusion of at least one wardrobe element indicating that the wearer's signaled destitution was, in fact, a choice. In *Dharma Bums*, Kerouac fictionalized Snyder as a central character, Japhy Ryder. While Ryder's clothing consists mostly of the cast-offs from men working in logging and construction, his footwear stands out: "mountain-climbing boots, expensive ones, his pride and joy, Italian made."[46]

Even though Beat dress was fairly diverse in stylistic detail, a stereotyped image of bebop style inflections pervaded popular culture by 1960. And while women are often omitted from the Beat literary canon, they were central to the popularization and evolution of the styles associated with the movement. Writer Joyce Johnson helped create and later denounce the image of female beatniks in sunglasses and black leotards, a look made widely popular by Audrey Hepburn through the film *Funny Face* (1957) and in popular magazines such as *Life, Look,* and *Time.*[47] In 1959, these mainstream magazines photographed and disseminated popular media images of finger-snapping black-clad beatniks with goatees and berets, codifying the association in many American households. According to Beat writer Joyce Johnson, aspects of the hippie aesthetic emerged in part from Beat enclaves on both US coasts. Greenwich Village bohemians reacted to media stereotypes of Beat attire by accruing wilder garments from thrift stores. Spanish combs, delicate beaded 1920s dresses, piano shawls, and purple mesh stocking were some of the element of the self-christened "Beat Pre-Raphaelites."[48] In other words, although the term "hippie" was not coined until 1967, Beats began to collect older dress elements that influenced hippie wardrobes.

The Postwar Politics of Secondhand Dress

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, the motives of secondhand dressers diversified, and venues continued to multiply. Garage sales continued to grow and flea markets filled in the physical spaces left by drive-in movie theaters as they dwindled in popularity alongside America's acquisition of television sets. Open-air markets of predominantly secondhand and handmade goods multiplied throughout Europe as well, and new venues appeared, such as Great Britain's car boot sales. Anti-capitalism, anti-war, anti-poverty, and anti-racism were among the countercultural sentiments fueling secondhand styles. This expanding cultural meaning relied on a certain proportion of the population's continued disapproval of visibly used attire as an apparent rejection of capitalism's ideals of success and power.

For the most part, the subcultural fashions for voluntary secondhand dress in the United States were the province of white consumers, some of whom used secondhand fashion to perform affiliation or solidarity with the poor and with racial minorities. In fact, in 1959, Kerouac placed his adage "Everything belongs to me because I am poor" into the mouths of Black architects of be bop, including Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and Thelonius Monk."[49] An appearance of elective poverty had at least implicit links to Black hipness, in keeping with Norman Mailer's 1957 explanation of how white "hipsters" expressed the suffering of white outsiders through inconsistent appropriation of Black aesthetics. In 1970, fellow writer Tom Wolfe agreed. His 1970 essays "Radical Chic" and "Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers" lampoon white Americans desperate to distinguish themselves from the middle class, from "fat mommies with white belled pants stretching over their lower bellies and crinkling up in the crotch like some kind of Dacron-polyester labia."[50] For many, the cheap, new fabrics and rapidly rotating styles flooding the postwar clothing market visually defined the middle class. Certain secondhand clothing was the antithesis of mass-produced, seemingly egalitarian wardrobing.

Thrift-store styles failed to resonate with many of the most marginalized Americans, for whom used clothing was a reminder of a long history barred from opportunities that led to upward mobility. However, gay rights activism and the aesthetics of what would now be considered queer culture did rely on secondhand clothing for personal and collective expression as well as monetary support for rights advocacy. The comparatively unrestricted formats of secondhand venues and the affordability of used clothing supported cis-gender disruption and gay rights activism. In the United States, the role of secondhand clothing in cis-gender disruption is variously reflected in the clothing habits of female impersonator José Sarria, avant-garde filmmaker Jack Smith, the genderfuck performance troupe The Cockettes, and punk icon Patti Smith.

At a practical level, thrift stores, flea markets, and garage sales offered broad opportunities for experimentation with dress and appearances based on affordability and display classification. While department stores displayed their clothing by size, gender, and even age, used items often appeared with less categorized instruction. Most importantly, thrift stores had less legal oversight than a mainstream Macy's, essential for gender-nonconformists in a time when cross-dressing was illegal. Queer culture emerged through and helped construct the aesthetics of underground art and film, performance art, punk music, glam rock, and more. The dress details of "camp" reliant on used materials informed the styles of many music movements that followed, and retain a solid footing in mainstream pop styles to this day.

Geographically and materially, queer secondhand styles connect with Beat and hippie subcultures. As early as 1948, José Sarria worked as a female impersonator at San Francisco's Black Cat Café, a famed Beat hangout. He kept financial records of his reliance on secondhand sales venues to compile a dual wardrobe and support his homophile activism. At a time when wearing clothing not "belonging to one's sex" was an arrestable offense, thrift stores, flea markets, and clothing auctions were a personal and political tool. In 1961, Sarria ran for city and county supervisor, and continued to organize gay activists. In 1964, he founded the Society for Individual Rights (SIR), a group that supported local advocates in part through the sale of secondhand clothing. The group's thrift store, the SIRposium, both raised funds and gave gender-bending individuals a safe place to shop for their preferred garments. Regular fund-raising events featured auctions selling drag apparel off performers' backs.[51]

The Thrifting Ethos of "Camp"

Meanwhile, in New York, avant-garde filmmaker Jack Smith and the members of the underground theater of the Ridiculous were crafting a "definable sensibility" for American theater. Susan Sontag defined this sort of glittery, feather-boaed, over-the-top anti-minimalism as "camp" in her pivotal 1964 essay on the topic. According to Sontag, camp is not merely a light, fun romp through textiles and colors, but a serious critique of accepted ideals, expressed through material defiance.[52] Smith and other Ridiculous theater adherents critiqued the role of novelty and capitalism in constraining and defining art. Incontrovertibly, a patchwork, gleaned-materials aesthetic defined everything Smith did. Claiming "Art is one big thrift shop," Smith, along with many others, created a persistent queer aesthetic reliant on secondhand clothing.[53] His photography, personal surroundings, film making, prose, and performance relied on a trash aesthetic obsessively collated from only discarded objects. His most-remembered work is a sexually graphic film, *Flaming Creatures,* which premiered in April 1963 and was promptly seized by the police. In the obscenity controversy that followed, one film critic called *Flaming Creatures* "the only American avant-garde movie ever described in the *Congressional Record.*" Smith believed the film was shocking not for the occasional absence of clothing but because of the subversive use of of "sexpartners not attired in brand new garments moments fresh from the dry cleaners."[54] While public acclaim for Smith was sporadic and fleeting, Smith himself influenced generations of artists and performers, including John Waters, Cindy Sherman, Lou Reed, and David Lynch. Andy Warhol called Smith the only man he would ever imitate.[55]

Junking as a part of artistic expression also blossomed on the West Coast of the United States (and assuredly in between as well) as part of the "hip consumerism" that invaded the Haight-Ashbury hippie community around San Francisco. In 1969, the same year the Stonewall Uprising in New York City spurred an increasingly consolidated Gay Liberation Movement, a queer performance art troupe called The Cockettes formed. The Cockettes combined the New York City anticommercial aesthetic of Jack Smith with a San Francisco psychedelic sensibility. Members of the group—men, women, gay, straight, bisexual, Black, white, many living at a collective commune—treated thrift shopping as part of their job. Gleaning colorful clothing from MGM costume sales, thrift stores, and dumpsters was, according to trash film director and friend of the Cockettes John Waters, a ritual for members.[56]

The original Cockettes' performances were chaotic improvisations based loosely on popular musical numbers, mostly staged in and around San Francisco. Patchwork, gender-bending thrift-store styles were central to the group's novelty. Responding to male members mélange of gender representations, including sequined gowns displaying hairy chests and glitter-speckled beards, commentary labeled the group style "gender fuck."[57] The group earned a cult-like following big enough to score them an invitation to perform in New York City in 1970. By then, the Cockettes founder Hibiscus had left the group over disagreements about charging for their shows—Hibiscus was staunchly for free performances. In the Big Apple, the group tanked, with reviews citing their haphazard disarray unsuitable for a New York City audience accustomed to professional veneer. The Cockettes disbanded halfway through 1971, but their stylistic influence of trash-glamour, thrift-store camp reverberated throughout American culture as members went on to distinguish themselves in other ways. Disco star Sylvester went on to become the first openly gay top-selling artist, with a 1978 hit "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)." Cockettes' member Divine became John Waters' film muse, starring in a string of "trash films" that almost took Ridiculous theater mainstream. In 1988, Waters' *Hairspray* grossed $8 million in the United States alone. Other Cockettes worked directly with clothing, helping to define glam rock style by dressing members of rock musicians as diverse as Alice Cooper, New York Dolls, Tina Turner, the Rolling Stones, and Aerosmith.[58]

By the late 1970s, camp was a secure, though variously interpreted, artistic sensibility whose reverberations verged on the mainstream. "Genderfuck," despite its edgy connotations, applied mostly to beglittered, unshaven men, but women, too, used secondhand venues to disrupt gender expectations in the 1960s and 1970s. Feminine use of men's used clothing, however, was usually interpreted as much less transgressive, even packaged in mainstream fashion as "the boyfriend look" to sell newly produced garments, especially after Diane Keaton's Chaplinesque wardrobe in the film *Annie Hall* (1977) popularized her gamine styling of masculine clothing. But years before that, poet and rock star Patti Smith used secondhand fashion to release herself from feminine—and sometimes, feminist—expectations and express an androgynously punk sartorial persona. During her college days in the late 1950s, Smith "searched for greatcoats in thrift stores like those worn by Oscar Wilde and Baudelaire."[59] Once again, the reception of a secondhand style relied on some of the old stigmas of discarded clothing remaining current. Nineteenth-century writings, from Charles Dickens and Henry James to moralizing pablum, indicated a belief that secondhand materials bore the flaws, foibles, and moral downfalls of their previous owners, as well as the potential of disease transference. Smith—along with the Cockettes and Jack Smith and many of the era's drag queens and kings— tapped into the almost mythical belief that preowned goods were a vector, but this time of positive creative potential, and helped craft a kind of queerness that used uncategorized, secondhand clothing to depict identities not easily defined by cis-gender heterosexuality, but also not reliably homosexual. By the 1960s, America's firsthand commerce was highly categorized for consumer ease, separating styles by gender, life stages, and class. Voluntary secondhand consumer and visibly vintage styles underscored the wearer's awareness of the constructed state of fashion and opened up more opportunities for diverse gender expression.

Members of the Cockettes' aesthetic influence over glam rock and Patti Smith's own punk affiliations point to a tight, lasting relationship between musical performances and secondhand dress. From Fanny Brice's "Secondhand Rose" (1923) to Macklemore and Ryan Lewis's "Thrift Shop" (2013) 90 years later, music has sponsored the popularity of styles forged by visibly secondhand clothing. Clearly, punk music and style, in Europe and the United States, relied heavily on recycled, remade, and repurposed clothing, pairing torn 1950s dresses patched with safety pins with Army-Surplus boots. Punk clothing, launched in the early 1970s by avant-garde British clothing designer Vivienne Westwood, often combined newly made punk essentials, such as metal-studded belts and jackets, with used and DIY elements, expanding further the visual repertoire of used clothes, and combining elements in new ways. While most trends come and go, fashion scholars argue that punk clothing moved beyond fad to become a static element of fashion, reapplied constantly but rarely waning. The film *Sid and Nancy* (1986), about Sex Pistils' punk bassist and his American amore Nancy, memorializes the central tones and elements of punk clothing, as do iconic images of Patti Smith.[60] Today, both "Sid and Nancy" and "Secondhand Rose" are recurrent names for thrift or vintage shops in the United States, demonstrating the long-lasting reciprocal influences of film, secondhand clothing, and music.

Secondhand Goes Mainstream

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the popularity of secondhand dress continued to accelerate, in fits and spurts, and among specific consumer audiences. In 1975, *New Yorker* fashion critic Kennedy Fraser pointed out an ironic "flea marketry" among young people drawn to nostalgia.[61] Soon, the term "vintage" reemerged and codified its application to clothing; some of it was collectible. Around the same time, the term "retro" was popularly applied to newly produced backward-looking fashions. Reflecting older styles in fresh designs was not new to the late twentieth century. For example, the late nineteenth-century aesthetic movement mimicked pre-Raphaelite dress with empire waists and muted vegetal dyes—by way of expensive, custom-made items, mostly.[62] But the rise in production of cheaply produced new clothing in "retro" styles between the 1970s and 1990s indicated a different role for secondhand clothing in determining fashionable looks. The reproduction of outdated styles of dress centered new production while maintaining secondhand influence over fashion.[63] In this way, I see secondhand fashion as indirectly contributing to an acceleration of fashion cycles, a privileging of sartorial novelty and related abusive labor practices in the garment industry, as "fast fashion" became a main source of American clothing.

The story of the retail outlet Urban Outfitters illustrates well the shift from secondhand fashions to retro reproductions. In 1970, a young anthropology graduate named Dick Hayne opened a West Philadelphia head shop/thrift shop called Free People's Store, featuring a blend of secondhand clothing and décor and new, exotic objects designed to appeal to the same crowd. At its start, Free People's Store was similar to the boutiques on King's Row in London in many ways, but its subsequent changes marked a different course for secondhand styles' influences. In 1976, Hayne rechristened his store Urban Outfitters, reflecting the rising post-industrialist appeal of the struggling American city.[64] In 1992, Hayne launched a new "lifestyle brand," Anthropologie. Around this time, Hayne's chain stores abandoned their increasingly small section of genuine used clothing in favor of cheaply produced, outsourced new items. Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie reproductions, resembling appealingly vintage garments, offered youths attracted to secondhand styles a shortcut through the racks of mostly-unhip used clothing.[65]

By the late 1980s, aspects of both punk DIY dress and an androgynous trash aesthetic were key elements of subcultural dress, especially in music scenes. The "grunge" phenomenon emerging from the Pacific Northwest of the United States affirmed Dick Hebdige's formative argument that sonic subcultures were as much about fashion as songs.[66] Grunge stitched together preexisting trends in both music and secondhand dress, including punk, glam, and Goth. In sight and sound, grunge wore its stitches visibly. The shredded edges and jagged hemlines, and the sonic disjunctions paid homage to the bricolage effects of 1980s postmodern art, which itself borrowed from and combined previous trends.

Shortly after *Nirvana* released their 1991 album Nevermind, visibly secondhand, worn clothing became the calling card of the band's mostly white, middle-class fans, with gender-bending, thrift-shopping *Nirvana* lead man Kurt Cobain as an unlikely fashion icon.[67] Flannel, laddered tights, and outdated-but-not-yet-vintage clothing from thrift stores, garage sales, and wherever else discarded outfits were found defined much of the style. Though the mass popularity of this secondhand style owes much to grunge musicians associated with Seattle, Washington, fashion designers had flirted with key elements for years already. Japanese designer Rei Kawakubo (a favorite of John Waters, once he could afford *haute couture*) had sold high-end designs "as threadbare and disheveled as Salvation Army rejects" since the late 1970s.[68] When *Vogue* called grunge the hottest fashion of the year in 1992, the pervasively sloppy styles spread to more couture houses and mainstream department stores, copying the flaws of used, discarded garb. One *Los Angeles Times* commentator pointed out that Todd Oldham's 1996 collection had the hip look of items found through deep scouring of vintage and secondhand stores, but "smell fresh" and "lack the sad mien the of the discarded."[69]

Conclusion

Many of the patterns reflected in this chapter continue, with trends for secondhand styles reemerging with fresh detail for new generations. In the 2000s, online retailers added enormously to the means of secondhand acquisition. The electronic auction site, eBay, founded in 1995, grew to a multibillion-dollar business with operations in more than 30 countries within about two decades.[70] Etsy, a craft-and-vintage-goods electronic-commerce company founded in 2005, spurred further market interest in "upcycling" goods[71]—using pre-owned materials to create original styles for resale.[72]

In recent years, major firsthand brands and retailers, including Patagonia, Madewell, and even Target, have tested the secondhand retail waters. Target first paired up with online secondhand retailer ThredUp in 2015, but abandoned the project six months in. In April 2022, however, Target launched a new site on ThredUp, with more than 400,000 items—including clothing—marked at about 90% off.[73] In 2021 and 2022, secondhand sales skyrocketed, propelled by Gen Z-driven preferences for used and re-made clothing, which accelerated over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sites such as Depop—now absorbed by Etsy—served as an outlet for young entrepreneurs with the time and resources to "upcycle" cheap thrift store garments for online sale.

Secondhand fashions and economies have long been characterized by their adaptability. Thrift stores, flea markets, garage sales, and global online retailers all filled gaps in the broader market, indicating the expansive value of recirculated goods. As resources for fashion, secondhand materials provide for consumers who are dissatisfied with aspects of new retail, including the prices, selections, environmental impact, and labor practices. Secondhand materials have been and are valuable tools for personal expression, artistic innovation, and economic opportunity. Since at least the 1960s, however, adherents to voluntary secondhand consumption have exaggerated the mitigating effects of secondhand consumption, in part because redistribution of goods is popularly excepted from discourse about capitalism. While buying used items may extend the life of those materials, wearing corporate brands with poor labor or environmental practices offers implicit support of those companies. Similarly, using discarded wares to increase the variety in individual wardrobes fuels the continuing acceleration of fashion cycles defined by high turnover and cheap prices.

Fashion is a collective visual language, regardless of individual means of acquisition. The cultural and economic role of secondhand clothing since as least the twentieth century has been diverse and wide-spanning. Secondhand fashions have helped validate non-mainstream sexual and gender identities and operated as an important vehicle of generational expression. Seocndhand items have been intrinsic parts of cultural language, correlated to phenomenons as diverse as musical innovation and anti-war protests. Current and future secondhand connoisseurs will no doubt expand upon these uses, hopefully with a increased sense of secondhand fashion's broader place in fashion and society.

Notes

1 See Woloson, *In Hock*, 7–11; 37–42; 71–75; Pollack, "Shylocks to Superheroes," 93–105; Zimring, *Cash for Your Trash,* 48–51; Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 28–30.

2 Block, *Dressing Up*, details the ways in which wealthy American and British women used secondhand clothing to assert their status and influence newly created looks. See 190–195; McRobbie, "Second-Hand Dresses and the Role of the Ragmarket" details the role of the ragmarket in inspiring "retro-style" in post-WWII London, 27–30; 34–39. Block, *Dressing Up*,

187–195; Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* tracks major ways in which secondhand clothing and commerce influenced cultural movements from surrealism to genderfuck to grunge. See 60–67; 126–132; 190–205;227–233.

3 The role of rebellion in visibly secondhand fashion trends is clear especially in music and music-related fashion trends such as punk and grunge. Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 207–213; 216–219; 242–243.

4 See Lemire, "Consumerism in Preindustrial and Early Industrial England," 1–3; Frick, "The Florentine *Rigaterrieri,* 16–18; O'Kelly,"Parcels from America," 83–85; Tranberg Hansen, *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia*, 2–4. For further specifications, see the chapters in Palmer and Clark, *Old Clothes, New Looks* and Tranberg Hansen and Le Zotte, *Global Perspectives on Changing Secondhand Economies.*

5 See Agins, *The End of Fashion*, 7–14; Cline, *Overdressed*, 20–25.

6 Recent work assessing the contemporary fads among Gen Z for secondhand fashions have made this claim. See for example, Jill Webb, "Has Thrifting Become a Version of Fast Fashion?" *1010 Wins* podcast, July 21, 2022. https://www.audacy.com/1010wins/podcasts/1010-wins-in-depth-33040/has-thrifting-become-a-version-of-fast-fashion-1515382745.

7 Green, *Ready-to-Wear and Ready-to-Work*, 46–47.

8 Peiss, Kathy. *Cheap Amusements*, 65–66.

9 Hoy, *Chasing Dirt,* 73–76.

10 See Le Zotte, "'Not Charity, But a Chance,'" 169–195.

11 Le Zotte, "'Be Odd,'" 245–266.

12 "New York's Cheapest Department Store," *New York Times,* 4 May 1902, C1.

13 Le Zotte, "'Be Odd,'" 262.

14 Le Zotte, "'Be Odd,'"259–261.

15 Block, *Dressing Up,* 188–191.

16 Block, *Dressing Up,* 193.

17 The role of class in post-WWII American vintage dress is discussed in Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 127–135.

18 Block, *Dressing Up,* 190–195.

19 Miller, *The Bon Marché*, 2–11; Rufus and Lawson, *The Scavengers' Manifesto*, 157.

20 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 52–57. See for example, Miller, Bettina Belmont is Set to Open "Flea Market," 16.

21 Sontag, *On Photography,* 53–56.

22 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 89; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 131–157.

23 "Fanny Brice's Nose to be Scaled Down, *New York Times*, 15 Aug 1923, 10.

24 Merwin, "Unbuttoned," 143–146.

25 Przybyszewski, *The Lost Art of Dress,* 144–150.

26 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 90–91.

27 McRobbie, "Second-hand Dresses and the Ragmarket," 27.

28 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 127–135, 139.

29 Blaszczyk, "Selling Synthetics," 498–99;-516–518.

30 The "American Look" stemmed from designers like Claire McCardell who emphasized comfort and practicality during and after World War II. See Steele, *The Berg Companion to Fashion,* 503–505.

31 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 90–95.

32 "The Twenties Kick," *New Yorker*, 17 August, 1950, 20; Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 122–131.

33 Le Zotte, *From Godwill to Grunge*, 140–148.

34 Reynolds, *Retromania*, 186; Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 140–148.

35 Blackman, "Clothing the Cosmic Counterculture," 215.

36 Blackman, "Clothing the Cosmic Counterculture," 215.

37 Lobenthal, *Radical Rags*, 31–32.

38 Qtd in Gorman, *The Look*, 46–47.

39 Gorman, *The Look*, 46–47; For more on the boutique movement in London in general, see Lester, *Boutique London.*

40 Young, *Electric Eden,* 195–196; Blackman, "Clothing the Cosmic Counterculture," 215.

41 Lobenthal, *Radical Rags*, 109–111. Echols, *Sweet Scars of Paradise*, 70–73.

42 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 153–155; Nicholson, *Among the Bohemians,* 3.
43 Kerouac, *On the Road.*
44 Ginsberg, "A Definition of the Beat Generation," 239.
45 Snyder, *Bubbs Creek Haircut*, 35–36.
46 Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, 11.
47 See, for example, "Real Gone Garb for Fall, Beat but Neat," *Life,* 48–49; "Squaresville, U.S.A. v. Beatsville, *Life,* 31–37.
48 Johnson, *Minor Characters,* 187–188, 210.
49 Charters, *The Portable Jack Kerouac*, 557.
50 Wolfe, *Radical Chic,* 41.
51 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 189–190.
52 Sontag, "Notes on Camp," 275–292.
53 Jack Smith qtd in Tavel, "Maria Montez: Anima of an Antediluvian World."
54 Hoberman, *On Jack Smith's "Flaming Creatures,"* 14–20.
55 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge*, 192–193.
56 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 200–205.
57 Lonc, "Genderfuck and Its Delights," 229–233.
58 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 205.
59 Smith, *Just Kids*, 20.
60 Cunningham and Lab, *Dress and Popular Culture,* 76–77.
61 Fraser, Kennedy, "On and Off the Avenue, 82–83.
62 Blanchard, *Oscar Wilde's America*, 138–140.
63 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 232–235; Guffey, *Retro*, 9; 14–15. For more about the role of "retro" and "hyperreal" in fashion outlets, see Betts and Bly, *A History of Popular Culture*, 148. For more on the postmodern hyperreal, see Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 43.
64 Gilstrap, "Not-So-Radical-Chic," 35; Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 233–234.
65 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 234.
66 Hebdige, *Subculture,* 63.
67 Le Zotte, *From Goodwill to Grunge,* 215–218.
68 John Waters first saw and coveted Kawakubo's shredded designs in 1983. Waters, *Role Models*, 96.
69 Avins, "Big Attractions *Plus* a Sideshow," 99–100.
70 Cohen, *The Perfect Story*, 2–3.
71 Sicurella, "When Second Hand Becomes Vintage: Gen Z has Made Thrifting Big Business" https://www.npr.org/2021/06/18/1006207991/when-second-hand-becomes-vintage-gen-z-has-made-thrifting-a-big-business.
72 Barber, "Etsy's Industrial Revolution," A27.
73 Alcántera, "Madewell, ThredUP Test Secondhand Store in Brooklyn," https://www.wsj.com/articles/madewell-thredup-test-secondhand-store-in-brooklyn-11632427322.

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Part V

Sources for the History of Fashion and Dress

28 Discovering Today's Digital Resources for Researching Yesterday's Fashion and Costume

Karen Jamison Trivette[1]

"You don't know where fashion is going until you know where fashion has been."

Kenneth Downing[2]

Thanks to modern technological mechanisms available to aid in the discovery of content in archives and library special collections, there is today a vast wealth of primary source material readily available for researcher consultation, regardless of physical location, be that the location of the researcher or that which is being researched. These holdings aid in scholars' pursuit of new information, which in turn leads to novel interpretations in the scholarship of fashion, costume, and dress history. This chapter aims to offer some context-providing definitions and pointers to search platforms, which will in turn lead to an inventory of primary source host institutions that particularly lend themselves to this exciting quest. I will focus closely on the holdings of the Fashion Institute of Technology Library's unit of Special Collections and College Archives, or SPARC, as just one example of hundreds of such repositories and millions of available digitized assets from global institutions.

To help set the contextual stage, and before navigating the rest of this chapter, please consider what scholarly research experiences entailed circa 20 years ago. Less than one generation ago, the steps of scholarly research were all nearly completed via an array of physical efforts, places, and resources. If a researcher did not have a well-rounded and extensive personal library, then s/he had to leave the home to venture to a brick and mortar space. Once s/he arrived at his/her destination, s/he had to rifle through drawers of small index cards, sometimes with indecipherable handwriting, with the hope that information carried on the card would link or point to a relevant item's location on a shelf. Assuming that the repository's stacks were open for browsing, then the scholar might find him or herself in a sea of otherwise limited access. Limitations would include unfamiliar classification schema, the number of copies available (if any), and restrictive borrowing privileges (if any). Many readers of this chapter will know the rest of this story!

Even more daunting was (and is) the fact that searching across archival repositories—and even within a single archival institution—is far more difficult than searching library monograph and journal holdings. Archives management, consisting of the most basic paradigms of archival records' arrangement and description, has always been esoteric from one repository to the next and sometimes even within the same repository. This, of course, makes finding what one wants to discover difficult if not impossible. Enter the Internet or, more broadly, the digital records realm. As early as the year 2000, as a graduate student of Library and Information Science, I was offered the prophetic advice to do all that I possibly

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could to get involved with any digitization project and/or to undertake training in and development of ever more profession-applicable digitization skills and those adjacent to them. Twenty-two years later, and at least partly in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the physical pursuit of relevant content—even original, primary resources—is becoming less and less the first line of scholarly inquiry. To ascertain just how much research modalities had changed over the last decade (or more years as the case may be), I asked fashion, costume, and dress historians to reflect on their own shifts in research behavior. Their answers were delivered as anonymous replies to an informal, two-question online survey.[3] Not terribly surprising, their responses confirmed the growing reliance on digital resources made available via the Internet. Two example replies follow:

> Much more archive material has become available online in the last decade which has changed how I search for this kind of supporting information, looking first to the Internet, rather than physical archives. I have also been working in geographically remote locations over the last ten years, which has necessitated more of a dependence on what is available online, since I couldn't easily visit museums and archives. Covid, and the need for remote working, has increased the amount of material online and also my dependence on it. Even with the return to in-person working and visits, my use of online archives will continue because of the distance I live from many important archives and museums, the cost of travel, and childcare.[4]
>
> Over the last decade it has been easier to access digital information in terms of research as more collections and papers go online. This has become the first port of call to research, but can be frustrating, misleading, incorrect and very helpful. Copies of out of print, out of copyright information can sometimes be easily found. Contacts can be made quicker with the rest of the world and we can share information.[5]

This is not to say that the physical world of scholarly resources is dead—it is far from that. In fact, *intrinsically valuable*[6] items hold such information that they must be experienced as physical specimens for one's full exposure to the *informational*[7] and/or *evidentiary values* that they possess.[8] The following survey responses concur:

> I have added the access to digital images and use this avenue frequently; however, I find that the truth is still in the artifact itself, and that visual information needs to be checked by other—yes, traditional—sources.[9]
>
> Though I admit the internet is a great source for a quick answer to dating or identifying garments and designers, I still prefer the primary sources [of] that [in] magazines, photographs, films, and of course the actual garments or artifacts.[10]

However, those of us who steward the care of physical records must come to terms with the past, present, and future momentum of digital records' prevalence vis-à-vis scholarly research and the pursuit of information.

Turning our attention back to matters of access, or the limitations thereof, digital access was, and in some cases still is, meant for the digital *haves*—those researchers with the internal and/or external resources to access, consume, and interpret digital content. However, momentum is increasing in terms of both traction and speed regarding providing open educational resources and democratizing the search for and the discovery of relevant online content. This plays in stark contrast to user experiences historically.

Indeed, as Kruger and Kurkdjian note, most researchers have traditionally felt isolated and removed from sources of scholarly interest. In fact, in my experience, most repositories have leaned, and still lean, towards advancing the preservation of materials, which is in constant and direct conflict with access policy-making. However, the digitization revolution and the advancement of digitized content delivery flattens this arch of contention considerably.[11]

Grounding Definitions

In the spirit of democratizing the scholarly search effort, let us now turn our attention to navigating the complicated landscape of primary source providers and the content they hold. Terms such as "primary sources," "archives" (or "archival records"), "manuscript collections," and "fonds" are often used interchangeably. That said, it is worth affording some attention to each to note the nuanced differences as they relate to discovering these special, if not unique, materials across myriad repositories.

According to the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*, *primary sources* are materials that contain "firsthand accounts of events and that were created contemporaneous to those events or later recalled by an eyewitness."[12] As the *Dictionary* explains,

> Primary sources emphasize the lack of intermediaries between the thing or events being studied and reports of those things or events based on the belief that firsthand accounts are more accurate ... . Artifacts and specimens may also be primary evidence if they are the object of study.[13]

The SAA defines *archives* as "records created or received by a person, family, or organization and preserved because of their continuing value."[14] A fuller definition is offered for *archival record*; this term refers to

> Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator.
>
> 'Archival records' connotes documents rather than artifacts or published materials, although collections of archival records may contain artifacts and books. Archival records may be in any format, including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, sound recordings. The phrase archival records is sometimes used as an expanded form of archives to distinguish the holdings from the program.[15]

In addition, according to the SAA, *manuscript collections* are collections of "personal or family papers. Although manuscript literally means handwritten, 'manuscript collection' is often used to include collections of mixed media in which unpublished materials predominate. They may also include typescripts, photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, news clippings, and printed works."[16]

Lastly, the SAA defines *fonds* as "the entire body of records of an organization, family, or individual that have been created and accumulated as the result of an organic process reflecting the functions of the creator."[17] *Fonds* is often used as a term reflective of a collective of archival records and is predominantly used in Canadian and European archives practice.

All these terms reflect one central concept: they are recorded evidence of human activity be they creations, experiences, or events. They are typically unpublished, have enduring historical and/or research value, and have other values beyond that which satisfies their creation's original purpose. Typical examples of such records within the universe of fashion, costume, and dress history scholarship would be fashion sketches, illustrations, and croquis; historical photographic material; and fashion forecast materials, just to name a few.

Discovering Treasures

Again, in the spirit of scholarly democracy, a major focus of this chapter is to discuss freely available digital resources primarily discoverable across platforms that are also accessible at no cost via the Internet. One such meta-site is WorldCat, a product of the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC); according to its website, WorldCat is "the world's largest network of library content and services."[18]

To facilitate researchers' discovery of archival records in particular, and across myriad formats, OCLC also offers ArchiveGrid; this platform hosts and provides more than seven million distinct records that serve as surrogates for archival originals. Each record describes archival materials including but not limited to "historical documents, personal papers, family histories, and more."[19] At present, ArchiveGrid delivers information from across more than 1,400 repositories, such as those found in or associated with libraries, museums, and historical societies.

Of course, there are other online platforms and meta-sites worth exploring; relevant sites include *ArtStor*, which is a repository of roughly 300 collections of more than 2.5 million digital images, including those reflective of fashion, costume, and dress content.[20]

The Bibliothèque Nationale de France's *Gallica* digital portal hosts a dedicated segment for fashion and costume resource discovery. Researchers may search across formats including monographs, journals, manuscripts, three-dimensional objects or artifacts, and films, all of which provides for richly varied results from a single platform.[21]

Regarding the video medium specifically, *British Pathé* hosts more than 85,000 films of historical and cultural significance. At present, this resource covers the years 1896–1978 and includes footage that is global in scope. Equally varied are its foci on "major events, famous faces, fashion trends, travel, science and culture."[22]

Europeana is a web portal created by the European Union that collects historical digitized assets from a wide variety of European institutions. On this site, researchers may explore 789,178 fashion items "from more than 30 European public and private institutions."[23] Digitized items include historical clothing, accessories, fashion runway photographs, fashion sketches, plates, catalogs, and videos.

More broadly focused is the *HathiTrust*, a not-for-profit entity founded in 2008. It is a membership-built and membership-driven consortial portal representing both academic and research libraries from around the world. It preserves and makes accessible more than 17 million digitized items with the aim of furthering scholarly rather than corporate interests.[24]

Similar in breadth to the *HathiTrust*, *JSTOR* not only stores and provides access to scholarly articles but it is also a rich repository for primary source imagery from institutions all over the world.[25]

Narrowing the focus again somewhat, and returning to video content, there is the New York Fashion Week website; it is a product of IMG, once known as International

Management Group, and provides access to the latest fashion showings. IMG more broadly focuses not only on fashion but also major sporting and education events and their associated media.[26]

Lastly, in Victoria & Albert's *Archive of Art & Design* portal, one may search around 118,161 records from the V&A's Art and Design archives. These include the archival records of British-based artists, designers, photographers, and others. In addition to these records, the portal houses the archival records of art, design, manufacturing, and retail businesses and associations.

Detailing Discovery's Path

For successful discovery of relevant content, it is necessary to know not only where but also how to search. This brings us to *controlled vocabularies*, also known as taxonomies; these terminological frames help researchers refine their search, leading to results that are more precise or on-point. Most, if not all, of the resources discussed thus far employ some type of controlled vocabulary. The SAA defines a *controlled vocabulary* as "an enumerated list of terms preselected from natural language and chiefly used to aid discovery in information retrieval systems … . Controlled vocabularies may be managed locally or shared by a broad community and controlled by an institutional authority … . Archivists include terms from controlled vocabularies in their descriptions of archival resources."[27]

For many, if not most, institutions of higher education or higher research pursuit in the United States the Library of Congress Classification system and its associated Subject Headings or Name Authorities can guide researchers on their discovery path. Using the *Library of Congress Authorities*, one can browse and view authoritative headings for Subjects, Names, Titles, and Name/Title combinations.[28]

Fashion, costume, and dress are art forms and, as such, researchers with these interests would benefit from exploring relevant terms and phrases found in the J. Paul Getty Trust Research Institute's Search Tools, specifically its *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT). The AAT contains "structured terminology for fine art, architecture, decorative arts, archival materials, and other material culture."[29]

Of great potential interest and value to fashion, costume, and dress scholars is a marvelously targeted thesaurus created by information professionals at the library of the Polimoda International Institute Fashion Design and Marketing in Florence, Italy.[30] The thesaurus offers both English- and Italian-language versions. A faceted "Apparel" section guides scholars to terms ranging from "Accessories" to "Work Clothes."

Functionally adjacent to controlled vocabularies are classification schemas, which were mentioned earlier. Essentially, these are systems devised to establish proper placement of resources in relation to other resources and within a larger frame or network of materials. The function of relating certain resources to other resources is the critical mission of both controlled vocabularies and classification schemas.

An alternative to the Library of Congress Classification system, yet still an authoritative organizational and terminological system that is very widely used, is the Dewey Decimal Classification System. According to LanguageHumanities,

> The Dewey Decimal Classification system, sometimes abbreviated DDC, is a method of categorizing books in a library by subject matter. It is a numerical system using groupings of ten—i.e. there are ten major classes, each of which has ten divisions, each of which has ten sections—and books are placed on the shelf in numerical order.[31]

This system was created by Melvil Dewey in 1876 and, in most libraries, the Dewey number and the first three letters of the author's last name become a book's call number or shelf placement indicator.

Locating Valuable Primary Resources

For the purposes of this chapter, and with the focus on fashion, costume, and dress history scholarship, I have compiled an inventory of educational institutions associated with significant and relevant graduate-level academic programs that are supported by equally significant libraries and archives. Also in focus are museums and other cultural institutions with a particularly relevant and robust curatorial department and associated research resources.[32]

Within the inventory, readers will also find links to collections of digital images of garments and other wearable items such as accessories. These links are included as I felt they would serve researchers well alongside and in tandem with the other resources. The inventory is first arranged alphabetically by continent or independent entity (such as United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland), and then alphabetically by institution name. Two exceptions to this framework are Europe, where France institutions are inventoried separately, and North America, which is inventoried first by country and then by institution. If an entity offers both its own resource and a dedicated collection via Google Arts and Culture,[33] then I have provided both and in that order.

For brevity here, I am also sending readers to a product known as a LibGuide for the full inventory mentioned above, as well as a compendium of relevant LibGuides discussed in the next section.

Curating the Curated: Relevant LibGuides

LibGuides, or Research Guides, are a product of the company Springshare.[34] According to its website, and as of this writing, Springshare serves more than 6,000 libraries across 82 countries and has content contributed by around 130,000 librarians.[35] LibGuides serve the research community in a manner similar to the way content management systems do. Librarians, bibliographers, and subject specialists use LibGuides as repositories of curated knowledge (their own and others') and subject-specific resource inventories, all with the mission to share the collocated information.

For the purposes of this chapter, and in my capacity at FIT, I have curated a specific selection of LibGuides, global in scope, that caters especially to the subjects of fashion, costume, and dress history. In each published guide readers will discover a wealth of content and pointers to holdings beyond the individual guides themselves. Some institutions have multiple, relevant guides.[36]

From the general FIT Library alone, there is a plethora of LibGuides with content curated to enhance fashion, costume, and/or dress scholarship. Such specifically curated content covers subjects including and not limited to: Accessories; Apparel Industry; Clothing Construction, Alteration, and Tailoring; Fashion and Clothing History; Fashion Design: Inspiration, Illustration, and Tools; Fashion Designers; Illustration; Jewelry Design; Menswear; Periodicals by Title and Subject; Runway Coverage; Smart Wearable Fashion; Special Collections and College Archives (discussed more below); Sustainability; and Textile Surface Design.

The most on-point FIT Library LibGuide (of those offered by the general Library) is its "Fashion and Clothing History."[37] The SPARC-specific LibGuide[38] serves the public as a guide to the unit and offers a tremendous number of links and pointers otherwise that assist scholars' navigation of the unit's operations and select content. In short, it helps visitors orient themselves in advance of making an appointment to visit, thereby managing expectations effectively.

Diving More Deeply: SPARC Holdings

In 2008, at the beginning of my tenure as Head of SPARC, I was charged to revisit the unit's existing mission statement and update it for today's environment and purpose, both of which are ever-shifting. It was a wonderful exercise not only to orient myself in relation to the unit but also to orient the public and give it an accurate sense of expectation and even anticipation vis-à-vis the unit's operations and holdings. Since then, the mission statement has evolved to the following:

> Whether operating on-campus or remotely, the mission of Special Collections and College Archives (SPARC) at the Fashion Institute of Technology remains the same: to foster original research across and beyond the FIT community by acquiring, preserving, and providing universal access to primary research materials including College archival records. Unit materials include physical, digital, and 3-dimensional examples. All acquisitions support one or more curricula offered at FIT; our user community is as diverse as the content on our shelves and all are welcome.[39]

SPARC's ever-growing holdings include around 12,000 rare books (dated 1680+), approximately 700 rare periodicals titles (dated mid-1700s+), and nearly 500 distinct and unique manuscript collections (dated 1590+), which collectively include more than 500,000 works of art on paper. These resources are primarily from the most celebrated American fashion design and manufacturing firms (and others) of the twentieth century. However, such material does not exist in a vacuum. Given the nature of fashion, costume, and dress history, as chief SPARC curator I also collect, preserve, and make accessible content from other periods and locations that inform the larger vocabulary and meaning of this complex subject matter. SPARC holdings date inclusively from 1590 to the present day and encompass over 6,000 linear feet of shelving capacity. Storage is a demand not limited to physical space; indeed, SPARC's fastest-growing content sector is in the form of digital assets, of which it now has roughly ten terabytes.

Of those ten terabytes of content, SPARC provides access to an ever-growing array of them via its freely accessible online vehicle *SPARC Digital*. *SPARC Digital* "is a platform … to showcase the rare and unique materials from our collections that have been digitized. Our goal is to make our collections more widely available online to the FIT community and the general public."[40]

While all of SPARC's holdings have brief and basic catalog records freely accessible via FIT's online public access catalog (OPAC), readers will notice in an entry's note an accompanying web link; this indicates that some of our holdings have been cataloged in, and otherwise controlled with the help of, Access to Memory (AtoM). AtoM, an online archives management system, was originally developed by the International Council on Archives to serve an international community of archivists and researchers. Today, AtoM is owned, operated, and continuously developed by Artefactual Systems, Inc. based in British Columbia, Canada. According to the AtoM website, it "is a web-based, open source application for standards-based archival description and access in a multilingual, multi-repository environment."[41] This additional, descriptive measure allows for researchers' content discovery that reaches far beyond an otherwise buried and brief OPAC record. Results are retrievable via a simple Google search. Every week, SPARC faculty and staff add valuable and discoverable content to its AtoM instance to connect researchers to ever more relevant and unique material, hence the tool's adopted name of *SPARC Connect*.[42]

We will now turn to a presentation of selected highlights from SPARC's manuscript collections. The texts below represent each collection's archival finding aid's *Scope and Content Notes* from cataloged collection descriptions.

A. Beller & Co. Sketches, 1914–1929[43]

The products of the cloak and suit manufacturing firm Abraham Beller and Company (active 1890–1931) were, in its short but pivotal tenure, considered to be the gold standard for American clothing manufacturers. Led in part by Max Meyer (1876–1953), its studios produced exceptionally beautiful sketches of high-end women's clothing inspired by European designers such as Chanel, Poiret, and Worth. Because of its early global approach, this collection holds a remarkable record of Paris couture created during the World War I years reimagined and recreated for an American clientele. Meyer went to Paris for its couture shows and was accompanied by a sketch artist. The resulting designs, around 9,000 in number, were then manufactured by Beller. Abraham Beller and Company ultimately shuttered its doors in 1931 amid the Great Depression, but Meyer's work continued in the realms of education development and reform. These efforts in turn led him to be a founding principal of FIT, which opened its doors in 1944.

Bergdorf Goodman Custom Salon Sketches, c.1930–1969[44]

The Bergdorf Goodman Custom Salon sketches collection contains 8,976 pencil, ink, and watercolor sketches representing clothing and millinery designs available in Bergdorf's Custom Salon, which was in operation until 1971. Staff artists, hired under contract, sketched the couture models (garments) arriving directly to the salon from Paris houses. These garments were made to order either from designs of the leading couturiers or from those created by Bergdorf's then well-known in-house designers. Representative Paris designers included Dior, Balenciaga, and Courrèges. In-house designers included Halston, Leslie Morris, Mary Gleason, and Bernard Newman. The bulk of the renderings date from 1950 to 1969. However, in addition to those, there is a representative sampling of sketches from the 1930s and 1940s.

Bonnie Cashin Sketch Series, 1953–1977[45]

This series consists of sketches representative of Cashin's clothing designs made for the leatherwear manufacturer Sills and Co. For 25 years, Cashin and Philip Sills worked together, marrying a love of sophisticated design and leather and suede. These c.4000 sketches, many with fabric swatches, were working drawings used not only to introduce the designs to potential buyers but also as a guide for garment construction. Cashin's designs were quite forward-looking and in many ways not evocative of a certain time; as such, some sketches were used many times over, year after year, with only slight changes in silhouette and fabrics.

Eleanor Lambert Collection, 1943–2003[46]

This collection is comprised of the personal papers and business records of renowned American fashion publicist Eleanor Lambert. The collection is organized into six series: 1. Columns; 2. Designers; 3. COTY Awards; 4. CFDA Awards; 5. American Designer Series; and 7. Miscellaneous (note that series 6 was omitted late in archival processing). One of the most notable and historic events that Eleanor Lambert ever orchestrated, which is well documented in the collection, was the *Grand Divertissement à Versailles*. This was a charitable event to raise money to renovate the grand palace, which had fallen into great disrepair. The event, held on November 28, 1973, became known as the "Battle of Versailles," as the evening's events were presentations of the work of five French couturiers and five American designers. France was represented by Marc Bohan of Christian Dior, Pierre Cardin, Hubert de Givenchy, Yves Saint Laurent, and Emanuel Ungaro. The United States was represented by Bill Blass, Stephen Burrows, Halston, Anne Klein, and Oscar de la Renta. Luminaries in attendance included Josephine Baker, Princess Grace of Monaco, Liza Minnelli, and Andy Warhol[47] (Figures 28.1 and 28.2).

Figure 28.1 Program front cover, *Grand Divertissement à Versailles*, November 28, 1973. Image courtesy FIT-SPARC.

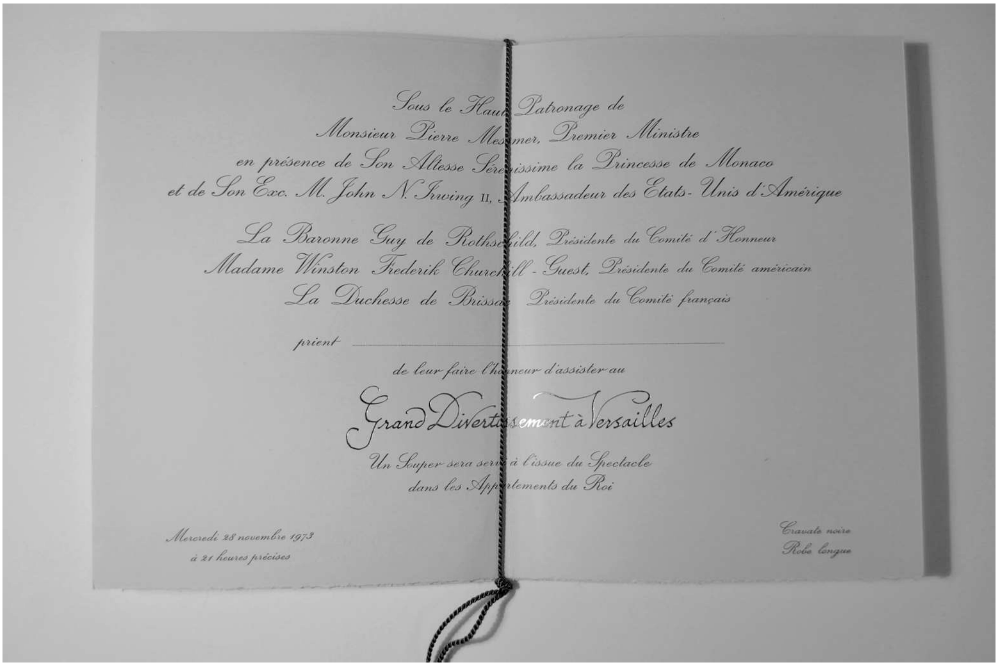

Figure 28.2 Program interior, *Grand Divertissement à Versailles*, November 28, 1973. Image courtesy FIT-SPARC.

Frances Neady Collection of Original Fashion Illustrations, 1913–Current[48]

The Frances Neady collection of Original Fashion Illustrations was established in 1984 to honor its namesake, an inspirational professor of fashion illustration. The collection encompasses over a century of original fashion art. Its earliest example, a watercolor by Pierre Brissaud for *Gazette du Bon Ton*, is dated 1913. Among other illustrators represented in the collection are Eric (Carl Erickson), René Bouché, Dorothy Hood, George Stavrinos, and Antonio (Lopez). Donations to the collection come from artists, collectors, and industry professionals. The donated works fulfill criteria established by the Neady Collection Advisory Board, which acknowledges artists who exhibit Frances Neady's high standards of draftsmanship and esthetic quality. Contributing illustrators have demonstrated an individual approach to fashion illustration, possess technical virtuosity, have worked for high-end magazines, stores, or corporations, and have earned the admiration of their peers. The Frances Neady collection's mission is to encourage and facilitate research by students and industry professionals in the art of fashion illustration. The collection presents a graphic record of fashion art's evolution since the 1910s. In addition, it provides a vivid cultural and visual reflection of its time.

Halston Sketches and Photographs, c.1964 and 1980–1989[49]

This collection is comprised of 121 black marker millinery sketches that date from c.1964 drawn by the illustrator Audrey Schilt. The runway photographs date from c.1979–89.[50]

Helena Rubinstein Collection, 1953–2011[51]

This collection consists of photographs, books, and papers belonging to the Helena Rubinstein Foundation (in operation 1953–2011). The bulk of the collection is photographs of Rubinstein and her portraits, laboratories, salons, apartment, and modern art collection. The collection also includes catalogs of exhibitions of Rubinstein's portrait collection, her autobiography, and other books about the cosmetics industry. In addition, there are videos of movies and television specials about Rubenstein, records of the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, and press pertaining to Rubinstein, Helena Rubinstein Inc., and the Helena Rubinstein Foundation.

Jamel Shabazz Photographs, 1980–2010[52]

This collection holds 50 color and black-and-white photographs taken by Jamel Shabazz. Inspired by the photographic documentation of African-American communities by James Van Der Zee and Leonard Freed, these photographs represent urban street fashion primarily in Brooklyn and Manhattan between 1980 and 2010. Most photographs have a date and location noted on the verso. Locations include New York City neighborhoods of Harlem, Soho, Lower East Side, downtown Brooklyn, Flatbush, and Fort Greene.

Lucile Ltd., Lady Duff Gordon Collection, 1910–c.1925[53]

The Lucile Ltd. collection consists of model photographs, fashion sketches, fashion show programs, newspaper and magazine clippings with articles about or by Lucile, order forms, advertisements, and fashion plates. The garment designs include theatrical costumes, wedding gowns, day and eveningwear, tea gowns, lingerie, and pajamas.

Ruth Finley Collection, 1945–2016[54]

This collection contains materials related to Ruth Finley (1920–2018). The collection includes published and draft copies of Fashion Calendar, Fashion International, Home Furnishing Calendar, Fashion Trade Calendar, and records of the New York Fashion Council. It also includes business-related materials in the form of advertising and membership and subscription information for each publication. The collection includes personal records collected by Ruth Finley, including emails, programs from fashion shows, information about awards, and a variety of images.[55] The original donation consisted of material dating from 1945. However, since the original donation, Finley's family donated material dating back to 1941.

Stephen Burrows Collection, 1969–2012[56]

This collection contains fashion sketches (originals and digital facsimiles), fashion photographs, and promotional materials documenting the career of Stephen Burrows; the material dates from 1969 to 2012. Burrows was an African-American fashion designer whose career is also mentioned in Elizabeth Way's chapter in this volume. In the SPARC collection there is a gap of press materials from 1990 to 2000 when he left Henri Bendel to open his own business on Seventh Avenue. His fragrance *Stephen B.* is briefly documented in photographs, press, and a silver wave necklace solid perfume. Ephemeral materials such as personal photographs and an E.R.A. ribbon are also part of the collection.

Concluding Remarks

The success of any information professional—archivists, librarians, or cultural heritage stewards otherwise—is measured in part by how much information they can give away, whether it is a single datum, collective information, memorable knowledge, or sharable wisdom. It has been a professional standard for me for more than 20 years. Fulfilling my professional mission currently entails creating, preserving, providing access to, and promoting digital surrogates of primary source material to the fullest extent possible. One survey respondent, writing on how their research behavior has changed over the last decade or so, said that it had been

> transformed—research almost exclusively online now. Aware that this very much shapes what I find by only looking at or discovering by accident what is already digitised. Obviously this shift helps all archives to be more useful to more people, helping to realise full potential, and justifying resource of looking after them.[57]

I aspire each day to help fulfill such research challenges and potential resource stewardship.

My mission for this chapter was to present and explain the full landscape of the research environment as it exists today and as it pertains to rare or unique resources in the scholarly realms of fashion, costume, and/or dress history. The resources available online are varied and rich, and this chapter offers only a glimpse into the pathways and collections that can serve the fashion, costume, and/or dress history scholarly community regardless of their physical location—be it the location of the researcher or that of the primary resource material.

Notes

1 I would like to acknowledge the generous support of my technical assistant, Danielle Paterson, SPARC Intern and FIT graduate student.
2 Kenneth Downing, Part of a speech delivered at the National Arts Club (New York, NY), April 24, 2022.
3 The survey yielded a total of 14 responses. Most respondents self-identified as affiliated with museums, colleges, or universities, or another type of cultural heritage institution.
4 Anonymous. Quote from survey administered online via https://forms.gle/JAvaL3ZZNPFCLrsDA, September 30–October 08, 2022.
5 Anonymous. Quote from survey.
6 The usefulness or significance of a record derived from its physical or associational qualities, inherent in its original form and generally independent of its content, that are integral to its material nature and would be lost in reproduction.
7 The usefulness or significance of materials based on their content, independent of any intrinsic or evidential value.
8 The quality or authenticity of a record in terms of the provision of legal or historical proof or adequate evidence.
9 Anonymous. Quote from survey.
10 Anonymous. Quote from survey.
11 Maude Bass-Kruger and Sophie Kurkdjian, "The State of Fashion Studies in France: Past, Present, Future," *International Journal of Fashion Studies* 5, no. 1 (2018): 228. doi: 10.1386/infs.5.1.227_1.
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50 Born Roy Halston Frowick in 1932 in Des Moines, Iowa, the fashion designer who went simply as "Halston" moved to Chicago in 1952,where he took a job as a window dresser for the Carson Pirie Scott department store. In 1958 he moved to New York to work for the preeminent milliner Lilly Daché before taking a job designing millinery for Bergdorf Goodman in 1959. In 1966 Bergdorf Goodman sponsored Halston's first ready-to-wear clothing line, which had its own boutique within the store. He left Bergdorf's in 1967 and launched his own line the following year, which was an immediate success. Lauded for his unique brand of American minimalism, he won COTY Awards in 1969, 1971, and 1972. In 1973 Halston signed licencing deals with Norton Simon. During this period, Halston was at the epicenter of a glittering social circle, and in 1977 joined in the revelry of Studio 54 with the likes of Andy Warhol, Liza Minelli, Mick and Bianca Jagger, and his coterie of models dubbed "The Halstonettes." Diffusion lines were launched with J.C. Penny's in 1983 and, the following year, Halston unsuccessfully attempts to buy his company back from Norton Simon. Halston Originals closed in 1985 and the following year Halston received the news he was HIV positive. He passed away from AIDS-related complications in 1990.
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Note: *Italicized* and **bold** page numbers refer to figures and tables. Page numbers followed by "n" refer to notes.